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THE FEATURE NEWS MAGAZINE

NEW TIMES

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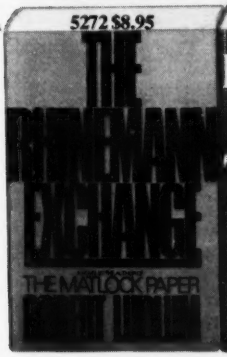

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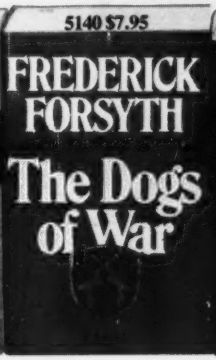

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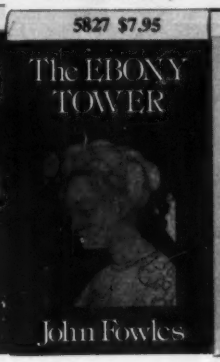

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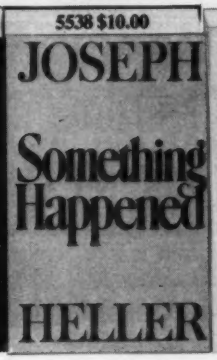

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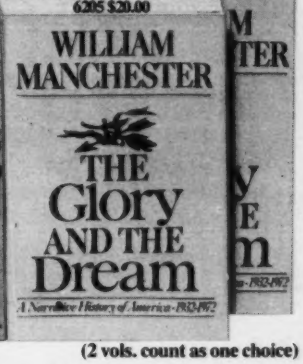

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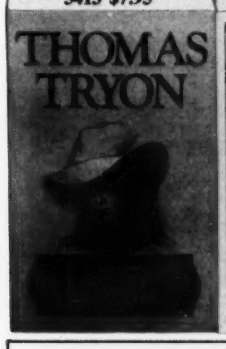

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NEW TIMES, April 18, 1975, Volume 4, Number 8

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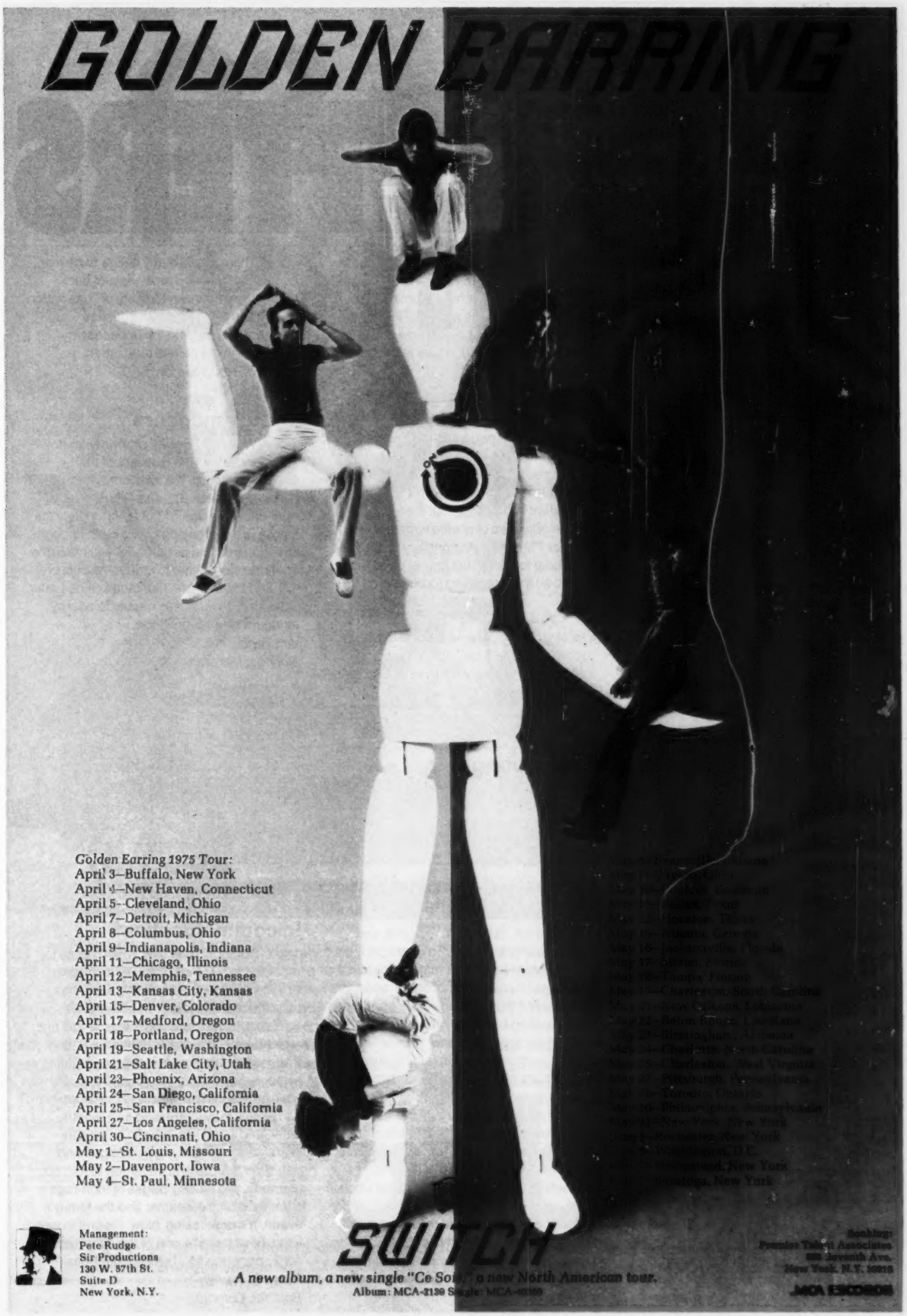
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LETTERS

Old canards

Old canards never die, they just keep turning up in the press, gamier than ever. I can't fault *New Times* for not including me in its list of "ten brightest congressmen" (April 4). I'm clearly ineligible for an all-male list. In any case, it represents a subjective evaluation by Larry King and I doubt whether any Hill reporter would come up with the same names on their lists.

But of all the things that could have been said about me, why did Mr. King exhume that silly and fictional story about my having given Fishbait Miller a sexual directive when he allegedly told me to take off my hat. Or that I "once ordered Speaker Carl Albert to cut the crap and get to the point."

As I have said repeatedly in the past four years (I'll state this for the record one more time): The Fishbait Miller story was made up by some wire service reporter who must have been a C student in creative writing. Actually, the first time I met Fishbait, he rose on his tiptoes, put his arms around me and kissed me. "Whoever you are," I said (we had not yet been introduced), "this is an over-response."

Fishbait never had to tell me to take off my hat because I had studied the rules as soon as I got to Congress and knew that wearing hats on the floor was forbidden. Similarly, I never had that particular exchange with Carl Albert, with whom I get along very well.

I can only conclude that some reporters find it more convenient (and less time-consuming) to depict me as a belligerent, profane character rather than as a serious legislator, a very active member of two House committees that deal with economic development, mass transit, government operations, freedom of information, privacy, a subcommittee chairwoman and a deputy whip-at-large.

I have a list of the 10 most accurate news magazines. Maybe someday *New Times* will be on it.

Bella S. Abzug
Washington, D.C.
Editor's Note: Please send list soonest.

Radical solitude

Thanks to Roger Rapoport's article on Patty Hearst ("The Patty Hearst Papers," March 21), I think I finally know what went on and what's going on in her head. Patty doesn't seem to be the poor-little-rich girl she once was, but rather a woman who realized that she was wasted. Radical by some standards, but surely now she is living for Patty. Why don't we leave her alone?

Barbara Garrett
Norfolk, Virginia

Roger Rapoport's tirade served as a fair warning NOT to purchase any book he should publish on the subject. Not only was the article a conglomeration of useless and incoherent information, but it was written in a style indicative of novice writers. I wonder whether Patty Hearst, monetary reward or the desire to malign his former co-author served as the motivating force behind this farce?

I also found Rapoport's mention of loss of virginity in the same breath with "going down the tube" illogical and insensitive. He surely isn't trying to make a case out of that, is he?

Julia A. Versau
Adrian, Michigan

Moral outrage

It is with a deep sense of moral outrage that I read the article "The new hustlers" by Robert Sam Anson in the February 21st issue of your magazine.

For a magazine that poses as a liberal progressive publication, it would seem to me that you have the added obligation to be wary of stoking the fires of racism, which, in the final analysis, can engulf our entire society. To characterize the majority of America's minority political leaders as "hustlers" is not only slanderous but demeans the hundreds upon hundreds of outstanding black citizens who not only have not accepted funds for themselves but have been instrumental in raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for candidates who have successfully sought public office.

Throughout the United States we have seen entrance into public life of minority group men and women who serve as models of good citizenship, devoting themselves to the issues that impact upon us all.

The Shockleys and the Ansons perform a disservice at this critical junction for our nation when it is more necessary today for people to pull together rather than pull apart.

There are so many needs to be met, goals to be reached on the eve of our bicentennial to make a reality of "one nation indivisible with Liberty and Justice for all." Such articles provide the unnecessary obstacles in the path of realization.

John L.S. Holloman, Jr., M.D.
New York, N.Y.

Energy mongers

Wally McRae will probably go down in history as the Che Guevara of the environmentalists ("A 'Marlboro man' blows his stack," March 21). The "Marlboro man" may "blow his stack," but unfortunately the smoke is the wrong color to attract enough attention from the people who will make the final decision: either to strip mine or leave the land the way it is. Montana is a beautiful state, but the loss of its beauty to energy mongers seems inevitable.

Jim Zepp
Billings, Montana

Apatheosis

Hats off to Jim Kunen's Slow Down (January 24) on the new epidemic (of) social disease—infectious apatheosis. It hit home and is a very accurate diagnosis. *New Times* may help to perk things up, but other than that, all I can prescribe is a bit of Randy Newman. At least we can laugh at our own predicament.

Robin David Linton
Fullerton, California

Breakdown in communication

Brandon Tartikoff's Final Tribute to letter writing (March 21) reflects my own opinion on the subject. Anyone who has read the published letters of the great authors can understand the loss of that fine art, and I, for one, regret it bitterly. A long, well-written, chatty, philosophical letter is a symbol of civilization and friendship. My lifelong search has been for someone who can write a truly interesting and lengthy letter, and so far I have been miserably unsuccessful. I have wasted pages and pages on people who managed to turn out, quarterly, two measly pages of inch-high comments on the weather and the family's health. It's depressing. Now, I regret to say, I, too, have become one of the infrequent correspondents Mr. Tartikoff mentions.

Karen G. Parrish
Boulder, Colorado

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Are phones dead?

SLOW DOWN

By James S. Kunen

The Phone Company, in what it calls the Miracle of Second Avenue, has resurrected 173,000 phones that died in the Great New York Switching Station Fire of February 27. Before the Miracle, I reflected on my lifeless phone:

Like Aristotle contemplating a busted phoner, I consider my disconcerted telephone. Once a fount of life—Opportunity's knocker—it sits gathering dust—deaf, dumb, a dead-ringer for a doornail.

I come to bury the receiver, not to praise it. But it's fitting to pause and remember what I've lost.

The phone is not exactly dead but *out of order*—that is, conducting itself improperly. A phone is allowed two forms of conduct when it's not in use: it can be ringing, or it can be about to ring. The phone owner knows that. A phone owner is never totally surprised when the phone rings. He is always in a state of readiness to answer the call, should it come. The phone keeps him on or near his toes.

It may come as news to you that answering the phone is optional. Most of us have hang-ups about letting it ring. But I have known two people—both women, interestingly enough—who would sometimes decline to answer the phone if they did not feel like talking to anyone. I witnessed this. What flows through their veins I don't know—ice water, I suppose. They sit calmly by while the phone rings, and rings, and rings. Why some person desperately needs to have hold of them the phone won't say. It couldn't care less, the phone. It doesn't care whose heart it breaks, the phone. Ring, ring, ring, someone's calling: no answer.

The callee never knows for sure who is calling. But who *could* be calling, the callee always knows. The phone as superego: the phone connects, undeniably—this is demonstrable—connects the children to their parents. Though the child be 30 years old and in a distant city, should he pick up the phone and answer to his parents—well, there he is.

No wonder so many people who in their most inspired moments could never do anything to interest the police think their phones are tapped. The phone alone, mute, but *au courant*, that is to say, plugged in, is conscience's falcon, ready to swoop without warning. *Ironic*, that's the word for it, that the phone, wire highway to romance, avenue to numberless affairs, conduit of libidinal energy, should at the same time be a restraining cord, an electric apron string.

They do call the Phone Company, this abstract entity, this *corporation*—person for purposes of law, mega-person—they call this corporation *Ma* Bell—nurturer, confessor, confidante, provider of oral gratification *par excellence*. Loving, but stern: don't cross Ma Bell or she'll *cut you off*. . . .

Hold the phone! Perhaps I'm getting carried away. It's easy to get loony—a little loose, a little disconnected—without your phone.

Easy to get crazy *with* it, too. Seems the phone is pro craziness, working or not. How adaptable, after all, is the human nervous system to this other electrical network? Can we respond realistically to situations apprehended through the long wires? Talking on the phone, you have to conceptualize like mad. You have to picture the person you're speaking to, fill in all the senses that are on hold while phoning, else you find yourself talking alone with a plastic dumbbell in your hand. You've got to project yourself through those wires to *get hold of* someone, to *get in touch* with him, to *reach* him by phone.

If you can do that, you can appreciate why octogenarians of my acquaintance say the most important technological development of their lifetimes is not the airplane or the A-bomb or anything other than the institution of the telephone, "because it abolished distance." You can become a participant in a scene anywhere, instantaneously, at will, and—what a fantasy!—you remain invisible. You can scratch yourself, yawn, and the party (everybody loves one) with whom you are speaking need never know. Of course you don't get something for nothing; you're invisible, but you're also blind. You can't tell what's real from what's phony.

The worst feeling a man can have is to call up a woman at night and suspect—or somehow sense? Who knows what besides sound may make its way through the wires?—that she is in the company of another man. Phones are pillagers of emotion because they're such tricksters. Full of surprises, keepers of secrets, they hold back as much as they convey.

But phones do knit people together. And they do drive people apart, obviating the need and custom of gathering in public places to talk. In New York 104,000 people were disconnected, which connected them through that sense of shared misfortune alienated urbanites love.

With phones, it's just one paradox after another, about what you'd expect from something you love-hate.

The phones are dead.

Long live the phones. ●

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FULMINATIONS

By Larry L. King

A fellow named Cicero wrote, "Not to know what has been transacted in former times is to continue always a child." Somebody, then, better rush out to fetch teething rings and teddy bears for Dr. Henry Kizzinger.

In begging more aid for South Vietnam's rapidly collapsing cause, our gadabout secretary of state speaks with all the historic awareness of a nursery school sophomore: if only ve vill pony up $2 billion annually for shree more yearz, zen maybe zere vill be light at ze end of ze Vietnam tunnel. It's as if—in the gud doktor's mind—that old carrot on a stick never had been dangled before; as if 15 fruitless years of United States involvement had never happened; as if LBJ had not been driven from office with rice-paddy mud on his shoes; as if our country had not been bled of billions of greenbacks or of the red blood of more than 55,000 native sons.

Dr. Kizzinger seems to have trouble remembering only two or three years back, when he and President Richard M. Terrible bragged on themselves for having attained "peace with honor" in Vietnam; no—they then said—no, we did not sign no secret commitments in doing this wonderful thing bringing the boys home. Now, however, Dr. Kizzinger bleats that should Congress fail to throw good money after bad, it will betray some vague "moral commitment" he and President Terrible made in reaching the Paris accords. Never mind that Congress—or the American people—issued no authority for, and had no voice in, the making of dirty little secrets the gud doktor now attempts to pawn off as a moral due bill to the nation. I have a suggestion: let Dr. Kizzinger pay from his salary such of the bill as may assuage his elastic conscience, and then let him store his dangling carrot someplace where it might remain warm and moist.

To those who find this suggestion ugly, I now ask: "How pretty do you find Dr. Kizzinger's public hypocrisies?" By this I mean his private evaluations to newsmen—and his remarks in his transparent role as a supposedly anonymous "senior government official"—back when Dr. Kizzinger admitted that once the U.S. withdrew its troops, South Vietnam might last two more years. Well, it's been about two years now. And, sure enough, the house of cards is falling. Why, then, do we see Dr. Kizzinger parading before microphones to claim surprise, dismay, moral outrage, and otherwise posing as the brave Dutch boy with his finger in the dike? Diplomats, somehow, seem increasingly to harbor the notion that truth is less important than illusion, that form conquers substance, that rhetoric beats candor, that the larger the pose the greater the actor, that not history's lessons but the *play* is the thing. Indeed, Dr Kizzinger once embarrassingly described himself as "a lone cowboy" riding out to tame all the world's baddies and black hats—a harmless self-conceit in a dreaming schoolboy, perhaps, though an alarming one in a secretary of state hired to negotiate adult problems in a world where they don't shoot cap pistols or bleed ketchup. Ya'll hurry up with them teething rings and teddy bears!

Not that even a fulminating old curmudgeon fails to feel true pity for South Vietnam's wretched refugees, motivationless soldiers, innocent peasants: may such a God as has a marginal interest in it bless these and their cousins in Cambodia, the Middle East or anywhere mad men in the name of freedom draw their guns. It is quite another thing, however, to recommend the aimless propping up of lost causes never so pure as they have been presented by Washington. South Vietnam's leaders, notoriously corrupt and despotic in their own right, continue to fail by their own poor examples: what democracies remain for Dr. Kizzinger to pretend to protect in the name of moral justice? Even as President Thieu—the latest in a stable of stumblebums—begins his great fall, we see the sudden reemergence of (No! Can it be?) former Vice-President Nguyen Cao Ky, panting at prospects of being recycled in the power machine.

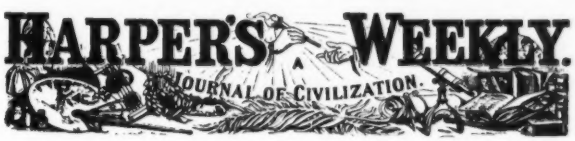
You remember Ky. Sure you do: he was the one always strutting around in a fly-boy hat, silk white ascot, a Paladin-cut black suit and a pistol, while carrying a riding crop and mouthing whatever optimisms Lyndon or General Westmoreland recommended. Now they've trotted him out again, and wasn't it surprising when he suggested that Vietnam form a new government even as Dr. Kizzinger urged us to keep on propping up the old? Did I not recall so much history, I might believe the two actually were at loggerheads. Without having inside information, however, I almost guarantee that Mr. Ky did not come in out of the cold until the gud doktor called him. One must remember the wisest and most accurate thing uttered by a member of the Terrible administration: it was Attorney General John Mitchell who advised, "Watch what we do—not what we say."

Dr. Kizzinger is saying how Congress will have let down the home side if it fails to finance the secret promises he and President Terrible made. What he is *doing*, however, may be another and potentially more terrible thing: already, it seems, he has surrendered a failing Vietnam in his heart, and now he is ready to go to the aid of the Arabs over Israel in the Mideast boundary dispute, oil being so important. Perhaps the only comfort the Israelis may draw from this turn of events is that, statistically, the gud doktor has a way of casting his lot with lost causes. ●

There are three things you can do:

☐ **RESEARCH:** Send clippings, photocopies, quotes, and other incidental intelligence. For each item used, you will receive a credit line and $10.

☐ **WRITE:** Send 500-1,000 words describing something in your immediate experience that deserves sharing. Published contributions will carry your name and hometown and earn an honorarium of $25.



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2048

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My name is Tony Jones. I just quit my job as Associate Editor of Harper's Magazine because I had an offer I couldn't refuse.

You see, for some time now I've been hoping to start an entirely new kind of publication. Now the opportunity is here—*if* I can persuade you to help me make the most of it.

No, not by subscribing. I need writers. Researchers. Editors.

Requirements: You are on your own.

And by you, I mean *you*. The new publication I'm asking you to help get started will be produced by its readers. By you, I hope.

As a matter of fact, the whole idea hinges on whether or not you contribute. Let me give you some background:

I was proud to work on Harper's Magazine, and I worked hard on it, but Harper's and other top magazines are committed to publishing the "best" writers in the world. This is understandable. And I agree we need this kind of source.

But this policy locks out communication of another, and in my opinion just as necessary, sort—different, honest, independent messages from the great numbers of intelligent and involved men and women who don't happen to be writers who know editors.

I want to offer a variety of communications from real people about just about anything. Short and pithy. Or longer if it plays that way. I'd have more by-lines than any other publication in the world. *If* my readers really did contribute.

In a real sense, this communication would be a collection of points of view. A swatch of our consciousness. An ongoing biopsy of our civilization.

When I announced my intention to Russell Barnard, the publisher of Harper's, he pledged that if I could actually develop the kind of magazine I wanted, he would publish it.

So I've decided to revive the famous HARPER'S WEEKLY, a national newspaper that flourished concurrently with the monthly Harper's Magazine from 1857 to 1916.

The people who ran that old weekly had the temerity to call it "a journal of civilization." Well, that is exactly what I have in mind for the new Harper's Weekly.

I want *you*, its reader, to write for it. I want you to write about your point of view from where you are. If you are a businessman and you want to talk about business, go ahead. If you are a housewife and you want to write about the effects of permissiveness on children, I think you are highly qualified. If you are a doctor who wants to pick up a pen and write a piece on your secret desire to become a hod carrier, I think it would be interesting.

Do you see it? A magazine containing people's thoughts and shouts. A kind of extended variant of the Op-Ed page of The New York Times, the letters to the editors of all times, hubbubby, and reflective of our civilization.

Frankly, many "experts" say Harper's Weekly doesn't have a chance. Reason? That you won't believe that I really mean what I say about *you* writing for it or researching for it.

Friend, I not only mean it, I mean it so much that *my* main worry about this enterprise is that you *won't* contribute.

I believe we need more exchange. We need more men and women of letters. People who can sit down and think something through and then write about it—not necessarily for posterity but to get the rest of us *thinking*.

Look, I'm also going to go out and buttonhole a person I think we should hear from who may not be a subscriber. And ask him to write. And I'm thinking of challenging some young artists to see if they can do as well with cartoons as old Thomas Nast did. I reserve rights like that. But once again, reader friend, the nub of the magazine will be your contributions, clips, original writing, or responses to other writing.

I've always felt it was a distinctly American trait that we *had* something to say. All of us. And that we couldn't be scared off or even bored off from saying it.

That when it came right down to it, we stood up and spoke our minds and left it at: "That's my opinion, bub."

I believe this is still true. And I love it about us. As for the reading, I believe we have a genuine and unfulfilled hunger to talk to each other.

O.K. If you're interested, you can help us in any of 3 ways.

1. *Do research for us.* As an active reader, you no doubt scan a wide variety of publications such as your local newspaper, specialized newsletters, professional, literary and political journals. Clip and send us items you think deserve attention. For each item we use, you'll receive a credit line and a research fee of $10.

2. *Write for us,* especially about things in your immediate experience that deserve sharing. Published contributions will carry your name and hometown, and you will receive an honorarium of $25.

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A JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION
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How the Democrats will stop George Wallace;
Cities that still work

THE INSIDER

EDITED BY TONY SCHWARTZ

POWER POLITICS

DENNIS BRACK/BLACK STAR

Wallace: can the Dems hold him off?

If you can't beat 'em, drop 'em

The drive to head off George Wallace has begun anew. The latest plan being engineered by Democrats is simply to drop the primaries in states where Wallace did well in 1968 and 1972. That would mean a return to the convention-style system of delegate selection, for which Wallace has never been well enough organized to win significant support. Bills that would zap primaries are already being considered in Michigan, Maryland, Tennessee and North Carolina—all traditional Wallace strongholds.

The Tom has come

Tom Hayden is planning a run at the Senate seat now held by John Tunney (D-Calif.) and up for grabs in 1976. The founder of SDS and husband of Jane Fonda is expected by friends to announce shortly—as a Democrat. Father-in-law Henry, a big Tunney supporter in the past, has promised his help and is reported to believe that Hayden will have more of a problem overcoming his lack of recognition than his image as a radical. Hayden himself thinks the time has come for the left to go after serious political power and has rejected the idea of running on a third party ticket as too difficult.

The Hayden camp's main concern is that Tom would be forced to give up his role as a spokesperson for the Indochina Peace Campaign. That fear, however, may soon be academic.

Eagle tongue

A true story making the Washington rounds:

Tom Eagleton, entering a Senate elevator, offers to tell the aide accompanying him "the latest Polack joke." From the back of the elevator, a sonorous voice pipes up: "I wouldn't tell that joke if I were you, Tom." Eagleton turns and discovers the voice belongs to Ed Muskie. "Oh, Ed, since it's you, I'll tell it real slow."

Defile or not to file

The number of secret dossiers on American citizens seems infinite, but in the next month nearly 500,000 of them may be laid to rest with the now-defunct House Internal Securities Committee, which first collected them.

HISC was a product of the 1950s' red scare, and the files were collected on Americans who were deemed subversive by the committee staff. After HISC was killed earlier this year, the files were turned over to Congressman Peter Rodino and his House Judiciary Committee. Rodino has kept them secret even from his staff, but he recently acknowledged the sticky problem they create and promised to take action. Among the options suggested to him are burning the dossiers, sealing them for at least 50 years or—if congresspersons such as conservative Ohio Republican John Ashbrook have their way—handing them over to a Judiciary subcommittee for future HISC-like probes.

The meditative state

Each day during the Indiana State Legislative session that ended recently, two conservatively dressed and very serious young lobbyists could be found stalking the corridors in search of votes. Armed with impressive statistics and a smooth approach, they sought support for a $1 million program that they claimed would cut crime by at least 50 percent, markedly reduce drug use and alcoholism and ameliorate a host of other social problems.

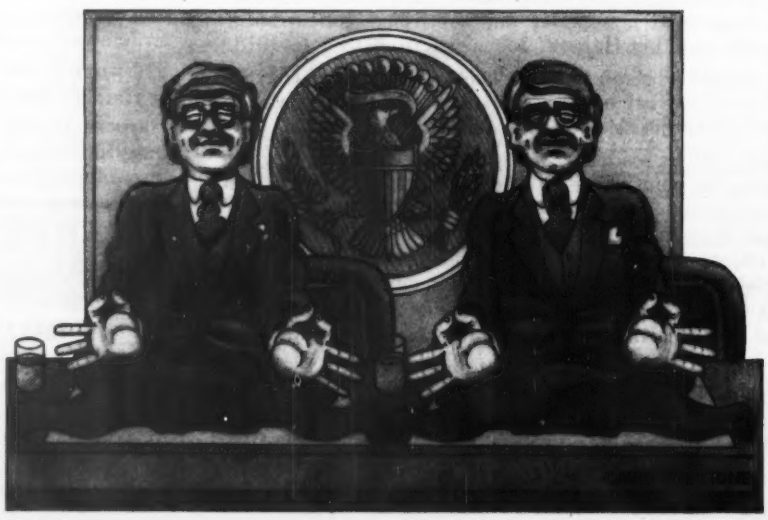


ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID PRESTONE

The solution they were selling was transcendental meditation.

TM is perhaps the most broadly accepted of the many available routes to enlightenment, and the proposed bill would have deployed 250 instructors throughout a county in northern Indiana. Meditation techniques would have reached half a million citizens. Although the measure never reached the floor, its surprisingly warm reception among the Midwestern legislators bodes well for a future attempt.

The bill's sponsors were bipartisan, middle-aged and not themselves meditators. As for the lobbyists, both college-educated, they did not think their efforts were wasted. Said Warren Farrell, 25, and a Harvard master in social relations: "I'd say 95 percent of the senators were very open-minded and willing to listen . . . . The government has tried many programs with dubious results and TM at least deserves an opportunity."

THE WORD

WIDE WORLD

Noble: dinner with Warren?

A Noble approach

Warren Beatty had an unlikely dinner partner when he arrived in Boston last month to promote *Shampoo*. His film, believed to be largely autobiographical, is about a hairdresser who sleeps with every woman in sight. His Boston companion, believed to be the first woman elected to statewide office on a gay rights platform and on the open admission that she is a lesbian, was State Representative Elaine Noble.

Cher and share alike

The romance between record executive David Geffen and Cher Bono hasn't really ended. According to a good source, Cher has been hanging out with other men—notably musician Greg Allman—largely as a front and continues to see Geffen quietly. The current cool is allegedly for the benefit of Sonny Bono, who has brought a $24 million lawsuit claiming Geffen and Cher "conspired to ruin my career."

DOROTHY TANOUS

Cher and Geffen: still together?

Phonying up

Elmyr de Hory, the protagonist of Clifford Irving's controversial book about art forgery *Fake!*, has now been ripped off himself. A thief broke into de Hory's Ibiza house while the Hungarian artist was in London. The uninvited guest made himself at home, stayed four days, and then took off with 250 de Hory lithographs. These are "in the style" Modigliani, Matisse, etc. De Hory says he fears the unsigned lithographs may fall into the hands of undiscerning and unwitting collectors, thus damaging the market for the originals. He hasn't always been as concerned.

A refusable offer

Add Al Pacino to the ranks of the Hollywood disgruntled. Despite the pleas of studio and Academy executives, Pacino subbornly refused to attend the gala awards presentations. The reason, he told a friend, is simple: "I went last year and I'm not going again. I can't stand the atmosphere."

SEVENTIES

Buy buy, Army

Today's Army isn't exactly pinching pennies in its effort to attract volunteers. Using the theme "Join the People who've joined the Army," their upbeat ad campaign seems omnipresent. And that's no accident. The annual advertising account, retained recently by the N.W. Ayer agency, is worth $40 million.

None is not enough

In the small Maryland town of Dundalk recently, 400 women packed a bar to gaze at four topless male go-go dancers. When word got back to the Baltimore County Liquor Authority (by way of angry males who had been excluded from the show), its chairman immediately made a ruling. Not only were patrons ordered to cease stuffing dollar bills appreciatively into the bikini bottoms of male dancers, but the dancers themselves were told to begin showing off less. As it now stands, they must ". . . conceal the entire nipple area and lower breast."

As if that weren't enough, last month the National Park Service rather explicitly banned public nudity on Cape Cod beaches. Two rangers will be patrolling there full time for violators this summer. Lest anyone quibble over just what constitutes a violation, here's a portion of the official Federal Register definition with which enforcers will soon be armed:

ILLUSTRATION BY JERRY ZIMMERMAN

"Public nudity is a person's intentional failure to cover with a fully opaque covering that person's own genitals, pubic areas, rectal area, or female breast below a point immediately above the top of the aureola when in a public place."

Citying pretty

If you look hard enough, there are still healthy, vital cities with low unemployment rates and hopes for the future. Rating them, however, is a bit more tricky. If you simply use Labor Department unemployment figures,

the cities with populations over 100,000 that fare best are the following:

Richmond, Virginia; Des Moines, Iowa; Wichita, Kansas; Jackson, Mississippi; Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina; Oklahoma City and Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Austin, Fort Worth and Houston, Texas. Richmond's rate was the lowest, and it recently rose to 2.0 percent; Austin was next at 3.3 percent. All 10 had figures below 4.3, which represents approximately 4 percent less than the national average.

A more comprehensive measure of the strength of cities was done last year by the nonprofit Council on Economic Priorities. The strongest cities included the Labor Department's three Texas choices and Wichita. In addition, the group named Denver, Colorado; Kansas City, Mo.; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Washington, D.C.

There are several aspects that the cities on both lists have in common. Over half of them are state capitals and benefit not only from the security of government employment, but also from the industries that inevitably collect nearby (banks, insurance companies, etc.). Nearly all the cities have at least one major university, and most of them are in the South or Southwest, where industries such as oil and tobacco continue to boom.

Suitable behavior

It will be some time before the Nixon Administration finishes paying for its transgressions. The latest chapter begins this month in a Charlotte, N.C., federal court when testimony commences in a $1.3 million civil damages suit brought against H.R. Haldeman, the U.S. Secret Service, three former White House advance men, the Charlotte city police and several others.

The suit grew out of a practice that was apparently common but not often nationally reported during the Nixon Administration. At rallies where the President appeared, the Secret Service—in concert with others—routinely roughed up and evicted demonstrators.

The legal action taken in Charlotte was the most far-reaching. It was initiated by a left-leaning agglomeration of people known as the Red Hornet Tribe, notorious for using

WIDE WORLD

Haldeman: buzzed by a Hornet

humor to make political points. When 22 tribe members were roughed up during an "Honor Billy Graham Day" in the fall of 1971, they hired a good lawyer and took the case to district court. Judge James McMillan, until then known for his tough pro-busing decisions, ruled in July 1973 that the demonstrators had been manhandled and that their civil rights had been violated. He banned the Secret Service from excluding dissidents at any future rallies and gave the Red Hornets license to seek financial damages in federal court.

Judge McMillan will again be the presiding judge at the upcoming trial, and, as it now stands, none of the defendants is denying the contentions of the Red Hornets. They claim instead that they were just following orders.

MEDIA

How to be your own best pen

The talk of the publishing world these days is the clever group of TV-movie fan magazine editors who bilked their companies out of thousands of dollars during the last seven years and were recently forced to resign.

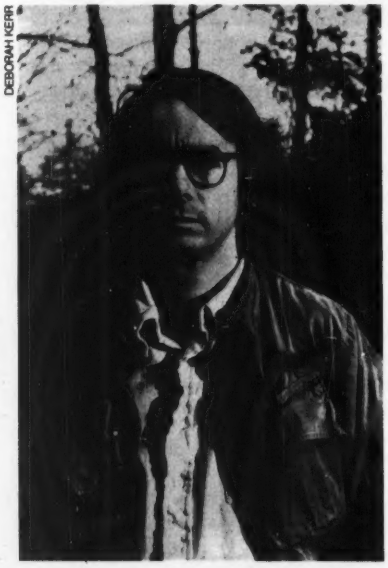
In a story that has yet to surface fully, the former editors of Ideal Publishing's *Movie Life, TV Dawn to Dusk* and *Movie Stars*, and of Macfadden's *TV Radio Mirror* got together, incorporated under a series of assumed names, and assigned each other stories at a rate of up to six a month. The scheme was uncovered only after Bobbie Gentry, the singer, and Ruth Warwick, a daytime TV actress, threatened to bring suit against two writers for articles they considered libelous. When lawyers set out to find the writers, their names and addresses proved nonexistent. According to a good industry source, the editors had been paying themselves more than their free-lancers and were known to heist—and then recycle—free-lance ideas. In turn, at least one editor is believed to have doubled her base salary in less than 10 months. Ideal publisher Jack Scott refused to comment on the scandal, explaining that "there is the possibility of a lawsuit." Whether anything technically illegal took place remains unclear. The editors all used their own social security numbers and dutifully lifted their pseudonyms to pay taxes on their earnings.

At least one question remains, however. Who will ever be able to trust movie magazines again?

POST SCRIPTS

C. Murphy Archibald (Feb. 7, 1975)

C. Murphy Archibald, the Villanova law student who lost his scholarship after the university realized he was white, has been vindicated. Archibald threatened at first to sue the university but finally agreed to an out-of-court settlement. Part of the agreement's terms were that it not be made public, but it is known that Archibald had been seeking full restitution of his first-year scholarship and additional assistance in the next two years keyed to his grades. His reaction to the settlement? "I'm satisfied."



DEBORAH KERR

C. Murphy Archibald: vindicated

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There's one in every crowd.

Eric Clapton's new album
On RSO Records and Tapes.

RSO

Distributed by Atlantic Records
Produced by Tom Dowd, by arrangement
with the Robert Stigwood Organization

"When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth."
—Sherlock Holmes

The greatest cover-up of all

By Robert Sam Anson

It was one of those coincidences.

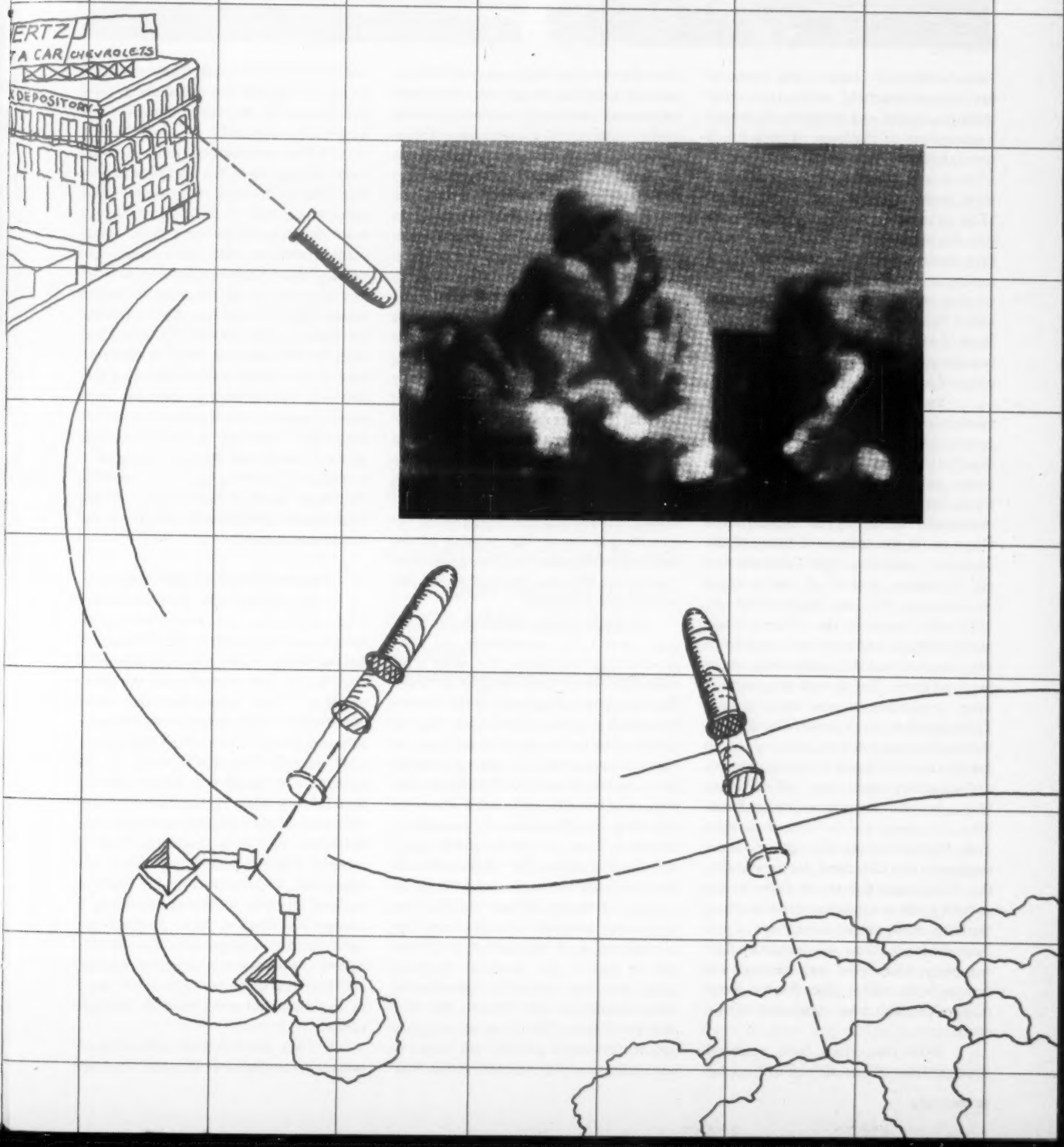
No one could have known that the bus would be stopping in front of Jacqueline Kennedy's apartment at precisely the moment she would be walking through the front door on her way to yet another funeral, but there, bizarrely, macabrely, it was: the bus with the big ad spread across its side, announcing in two-foot-high letters that "Lee Harvey Oswald Was Innocent." For a moment, there was an embarrassed silence. All that indicated recognition was a slight widening of the eyes and an almost imperceptible tightening of the muscles of her face. And then she was gone, disappearing in her limousine.

Even now, 11 and a half years since that sunny day in Dallas, it is the murder no one will ever forget. Two presidents have come and gone, a war, rebellions, changes without number. And still the image persists. A young president, pledged "to do better," riding in an open limousine, waving to cheering crowds. A turn, then another turn, and the car is heading past a tall building, slowly gliding toward the tunnel that lies just beyond a grassy knoll. The wife of the governor turns toward him and smiles. "You can't say the people of Dallas don't love you, Mr. President." There is no answer, only a sharp, popping noise, a sound like firecrackers. In that moment everything changes.

The furies that were released with the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy have never gone away. Nor have the doubts that have surrounded the circumstances of his killing. The Warren Commission's verdict that a "deranged" young man named Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, murdered President Kennedy and seriously wounded Governor John Connally, only to be killed himself two days later by another deranged, lone assassin named Jack Ruby, raised as many questions as it answered Two years after the publication of the commission's findings—a report and 26 volumes of documents and testimony, based on 25,000 interviews—the Gallup and Harris polls found that nearly two-thirds of the American people disbelieved its conclusions.

The "dirty rumors" the Warren Commission tried to squash have not gone away. Now Watergate and new evidence have forced another look. The conclusion: a conspiracy for sure

They were not the only doubters. Lyndon Johnson, who had appointed the commission, went to his grave believing that his predecessor had been the victim of a "communist" conspiracy. John Connally loudly proclaimed his objections to the commission's finding that he had been wounded by the same bullet that had allegedly passed through the President's throat. The commission's version of Connally's wounding was crucial, since, as one commission lawyer put it, "more shots means more assassins." Several members of the commission itself were less than convinced of the accuracy of the report they signed. Rep. Hale Boggs of Louisiana, a commission member, was particularly upset by many of the findings and wanted to issue a minority report, until the commission agreed to insert "probables" in front of many items that had been marked certainties. Even so, Boggs was less than satisfied. Until his mysterious disappearance in a light plane flying over Alaska in 1972, he continued to tell friends that the Warren Commission was in error. Similarly, the late Senator Richard Russell, who had been placed on the commission in deference to his power as chairman of the Armed Ser-


ERTZ
A CAR CHEVROLETS
DEPOSITORY

vices Committee, made slight secret of his disenchantment with the commission's report and encouraged private investigators to challenge its findings. "I never believed that he [Oswald] did it without any consultation or encouragement whatsoever," Russell said in 1970. "Too many things caused me to doubt that he planned it all by himself." And then there were the witnesses to the assassination itself. Fifty-two of them insisted that at least some of the shots that killed President Kennedy came from in front of him, from the direction of the infamous grassy knoll. The commission discounted all of them.

Small wonder, then, that the commission's report proved a breeding ground for skeptics. In the years immediately following the assassination, 26 books and dozens of articles, some of them serious, some simply scurrilous, challenged the finding that Oswald acted alone or, in the opinion of many of the doubters—including Mark Lane and Sylvia Meagher, author of the seminal *Accessories After the Fact*—at all. By 1967, the holes in the Warren Commission report had become so numerous and obvious, and the public furor about them so great, that several congressmen were demanding a new investigation. Then, another one of those coincidences. In New Orleans a district attorney named Jim Garrison, a figure of large ambition and unsavory reputation, indicted Clay Shaw, director of the New Orleans Trade Mart, for conspiracy to murder John Kennedy. Garrison claimed that Shaw was the ringleader of a CIA cabal. He proved only that Clay was a devotee of kinky homosexuality. After a ludicrous trial, in which Garrison made almost no attempt to produce evidence, Shaw was acquitted. Subsequently, Shaw died and Garrison was driven from office. The Warren Commission's critics were scattered in disarray.

Now the critics have returned, stronger than before. Armed with sophisticated new technology and a raft of Freedom of Information lawsuits, they have uncovered additional evidence pointing to the existence of a conspiracy—a conspiracy in which Lee Harvey Oswald was not involved, if indeed there ever was a Lee Harvey Oswald. Within the last few months, Congressman Henry Gonzalez, a Democrat from San Antonio, has introduced a resolution calling for a congressional investigation of the assassination. A petition backing it has collected more than 250,000 signatures on the West Coast alone. A bootlegged copy of the long-suppressed Zapruder film, showing President Kennedy being driven violently backward by a shot that rips off the top of his head, has been shown on national television twice. Perhaps most significant of all, the Justice Department, according to reliable sources, has very quietly begun a high-level, internal review of Oswald's background. In the past, rumors have circulated that Oswald was an agent of one or more intelligence agencies, perhaps including the FBI. Now, the rumors are taking on some substance.

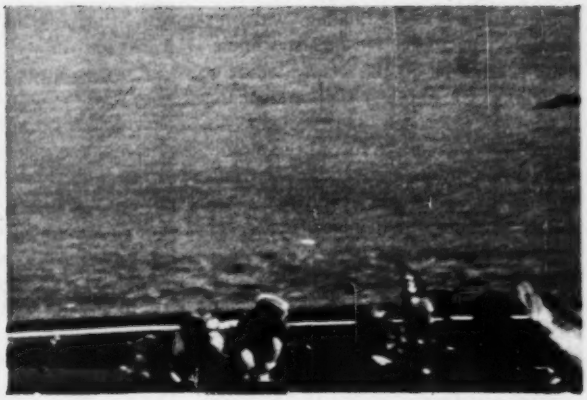
Much of the evidence that is being gone over today is precisely the same ground that the critics went over a decade ago. What has changed is belief. The strongest selling point of the Warren Commission is not what it said but the people who said it: some of the most respected men in the land, among them the chief justice of the United States, two directors of the CIA and a man who a decade later would assume the presidency, Gerald R. Ford. If a senior public figure stated something in 1964, there was a tendency to take him at his word. In the aftermath of Watergate and Vietnam, few people are prepared to believe anything that comes out of Washington. In a sense, that is part of the problem. As Mark Lane, who has returned to investigating the assassination after sojourns into Vietnam protests and Indian rights struggles, puts it: "It's not a question any longer of persuading people to disbelieve the Warren Commission report. They are ready to believe almost any explanation, however crazy, as long as it doesn't come from the government."

The proposition that Oswald *wasn't* acting alone has always seemed a little crazy. Because, if he wasn't, then there must have been a *conspiracy*, a word that does not go down easily among many Americans. And, if there was a conspiracy, then there must have been an effort to cover it up, an effort so monumental that it would have had to include the Dallas police, the CIA, the Secret Service, the FBI and, yes, possibly the President of the United States. Ten years ago, that was a little hard to swallow. Even now, it is a story one would rather not believe. But there are the questions that won't go away. And there is Watergate: a conspiracy involving the CIA, the FBI, the Department of Justice and, yes, the President of the United States. Suddenly, it becomes possible.

The commission and the critics

Impossible, said the commission, from the moment it began its work. Conspiracy was the one thing the commission did not want to hear, much less discover. Earl Warren, who had accepted the chairmanship of the commission only after considerable arm-twisting from President Johnson, made it clear at the first, secret staff meeting of the commission that his mission and theirs was more political than investigatory. He had taken the job, Warren told the commission, because the President had convinced him that if rumors about a conspiracy were not squelched, it could conceivably lead the country into war. As Melvin Eisenberg, a commission lawyer, later recalled the chief justice's charge in a memo, "He placed emphasis on quenching rumors, and precluding further speculation such as that which has surrounded the death of Lincoln."

Thus, under extreme political pressures, the commission set about its task.



With no investigative staff of its own, it relied on the FBI and CIA to do its field work for it. At times, the reliance proved embarrassing, as when the FBI report came in stating that President Kennedy and Governor Connally had been wounded by separate shots. The FBI version of the President's wounds also differed sharply from the commission's version, which later was condemned by the American Academy of Forensic Pathologists as being so incomplete and sloppy as to be no autopsy at all. The FBI's placement of the President's wounds—one in the head, another some six inches below the neck—made the commission's scenario of events untenable. Secret Service men who witnessed both the shooting and the autopsy also placed the back wound well below the neck, as did the autopsy doctors' own diagram. The President's jacket and shirt also showed a bullet hole just beneath the shoulder. Faced with such evidence, the commission chose the only practicable course: it ignored it.

Instead, the commission's junior lawyers came up with their own theory of the assassination, one contradicted by ballistics findings, autopsy results and the testimony of every witness to the actual event. In time, it came to be called "the magic bullet theory."

Simply stated, the commission found that three bullets were fired that day in Dealey Plaza, all from the rear. The final, fatal shot hit the President in the back of the head. The second shot missed completely and struck the pavement, wounding a bystander. The first, the "magic" bullet, struck President Kennedy in the back just below the neck, passed through his neck into the back of Governor Connally, smashed through Connally's rib and out his chest below his right nipple, and continued on to strike his wrist, finally winding up in Connally's thigh. In short, one shot, seven holes.

If there were only one assassin, firing from the sixth floor of the School Book Depository, the commission's theory made sense. Indeed, it was the only theory that could account for a lone assassin, since the alleged murder weapon, a 1940 vintage Italian-made Mannlicher-Carcano, was a clumsy, single shot, difficult to operate weapon. Tests conducted by the commission determined that it was physically impossible to shoot and load the Carcano more than three times in the 5.6 seconds between the first time the President was hit and the final, fatal shot.

The trouble began when the commission attempted to duplicate Oswald's alleged marksmanship. First, they found that the rifle was fitted with a left-handed scope; Oswald was right-handed. Then, too, shims had to be inserted to make the scope accurate. Ignoring the fact that Oswald's Marine records showed him to be a

A petition backing a reinvestigation has collected more than 250,000 signatures on the West Coast alone

poor shot, the commission had three master marksmen from the National Rifle Association recreate the events in Dallas by hitting a level, stationary target. None of them could. Of course, Oswald could have been lucky. As for the one and a half seconds that elapse between the time the Zapruder film shows the President to be hit and Governor Connally bunching up and slumping over, the commission suggested that Connally was merely experiencing a "delayed reaction" to having his chest torn open by a high-powered rifle bullet.

Totally inexplicable is how the bullet that purportedly did all this damage (and was later conveniently discovered on the governor's stretcher in a corridor of Parkland Hospital) emerged so miraculously intact, virtually undeformed, with only 2.5 grains missing from its normal weight. The commission itself had a similar bullet fired into the wrist bone of a cadaver and found that the bullet was mangled.

The most damning evidence, though, comes from the most unlikely source: J. Edgar Hoover. In a letter to the commission not included in the original 26 volumes of evidence and testimony, Hoover reveals that the magic bullet and bullet fragments were subsequently subjected to spectrographic analysis. That test, Hoover reports, was inconclusive. However, there was an additional test, a Neutron Activation Analysis, a highly sophisticated technique that measures the differences in material that has been bombarded with radiation down to parts per billion and sometimes even less. In his letter to the commission, Hoover blandly reports that while "minor variations" were found between the fragments taken from President Kennedy's body and those taken from Governor Connally's body, those differences were not judged to be "sufficient." To the layman, that explanation sounds fine, and certainly the commission did not question it. But the beauty of NAA is that the size of differences between particles are meaningless. Virtually *any* difference, however minute, is not only "sufficient" but irrefutable. Unless atoms changed their structure that day in Dallas, John Kennedy and John Connally were wounded by separate bullets.

Perhaps the subtleties of neutrons and atoms may have escaped the members of the commission. Incredibly, no mention of the NAA test or Hoover's letter is to be found either in the report or the 26 volumes of evidence (so far the FBI has refused to release copies of the actual NAA findings). Far more graphic evidence, however, was right in front of them: a color film of the assassination itself.

Abraham Zapruder, a Dallas dress

manufacturer, was standing with his secretary on a concrete pedestal immediately adjacent to the grassy knoll on November 22, 1963. A supporter of the President, Zapruder had brought his 8mm movie camera to record the motorcade. What he saw through the viewfinder instead was the most horrifying moment in modern American history.

Though a few frames are unaccountably missing, and though the film has been spliced twice, the 22-second Zapruder film is startling enough. We see the lead motorcycles turning onto Elm Street, and behind them the President's blue Lincoln. Kennedy is smiling, waving to the crowds. Then, for a few seconds, the car disappears behind a freeway sign. When it emerges, Kennedy has been hit. His hands are clenched, and he is bringing his arms up to his throat. Connally, apparently unhurt, turns back to his right trying to see what has happened. He turns around and is beginning to turn to his left when his cheeks suddenly puff, his hair goes askew, and he is driven downward in the car. In the rear seat Mrs. Kennedy has now begun to lean over her stricken husband, who has begun to fall forward and to the left. The car continues on, almost coasting down the hill. Seconds pass. One one thousand, two one thousand, three one thousand, four one thousand, five one thousand, six. . . . And then, for a fraction of an instant, the President's head is thrown forward a few inches, a blur, lost in the sudden violent impact that tears away the right side of his head in a shower of blood and brains and throws him backward in the car at a speed of 104 miles per hour.

Until recently, these pictures have been seen by a comparative handful of people. *Life* magazine, which bought Zapruder's film for $25,000, suppressed the fatal frames for reasons of "taste." To most researchers who have seen the Zapruder film, the conclusion is obvious: the final shot comes from the right and to the front, and can only have been fired from the grassy knoll. Josiah Thompson, a Haverford College Professor who was hired by *Life* to work on its investigation of the assassination (and then left when the editors would not accept his evidence of a conspiracy), has studied the Zapruder film more closely and longer than anyone. His conclusion, based on the film, is that there were at least four shots. The first, fired from the School Book Depository, which struck the President in the back. The second, fired from the roof of the nearby County Records Building, which hit Connally. And a final, double impact: a third shot, which hits the President in the back of the head, and a fourth, which hits him in the head and is fired from the front.

Thompson's theory is based on nothing more than a simple application of Newton's third law of motion: every action has an equal and opposite reaction. When bodies are hit from the rear, they move forward. When hit from the front, they move backward. That is precisely what occurs in the Zapruder film. The commission ignored it. To accept it would have been to say there had been a conspiracy.

Zapruder himself thought there had been one. He later testified that he had heard shots whistle past his right ear. His film, according to some investigators, not only records the assassination but one of the killers. The "figure" is seen in frame 413, toward the end of the film, as the presidential limousine disappears behind some bushes before entering the tunnel. In those bushes is a dark shadow that,to some, appears to be the head and arms of a man, who appears to be pointing a rifle. There are many doubts, even among conspiracy theorists, over whether the shadow is actually a man. Final proof or disproof awaits image enhancement tests, which are currently being conducted at Cornell University.

Taken together, these happenings form a mosaic of a man in, around, aided and abetted by intelligence agencies through the last six years of his life

A clearer image of a man, pointing what seems to be a gun, appears in a film taken by Orville Nix, who was standing across Elm Street from Zapruder at the time of the assassination. Extreme blow-ups of the 8mm frame, though very hazy, seem to show a man pointing what could be a long-barreled, sighted pistol from behind a cream-colored Rambler station wagon parked behind the grassy knoll. Later, the picture was shown to Lee Bowers, a railroad worker, who witnessed the assassination from a nearby switching tower and told the Warren Commission he had seen unusual "commotion" near the stockade fence just as the shots rang out. "That's exactly what I saw," Bowers said of the picture. A few months later, Bowers was killed when his car struck a bridge abutment. He had been driving in daylight, on an open road and at moderate speed, when his car suddenly swerved off the side of the road. (Bowers was one of 17 witnesses connected to the Kennedy, Oswald or J.D. Tippit murders to die under strange circumstances within three years of the assassination. Five died of what were officially listed as "natural" causes; the other 12 were victims of murder, accidents or suicide. The actuarial odds of such a string of deaths have been reckoned at 100 *trillion* to 1.)

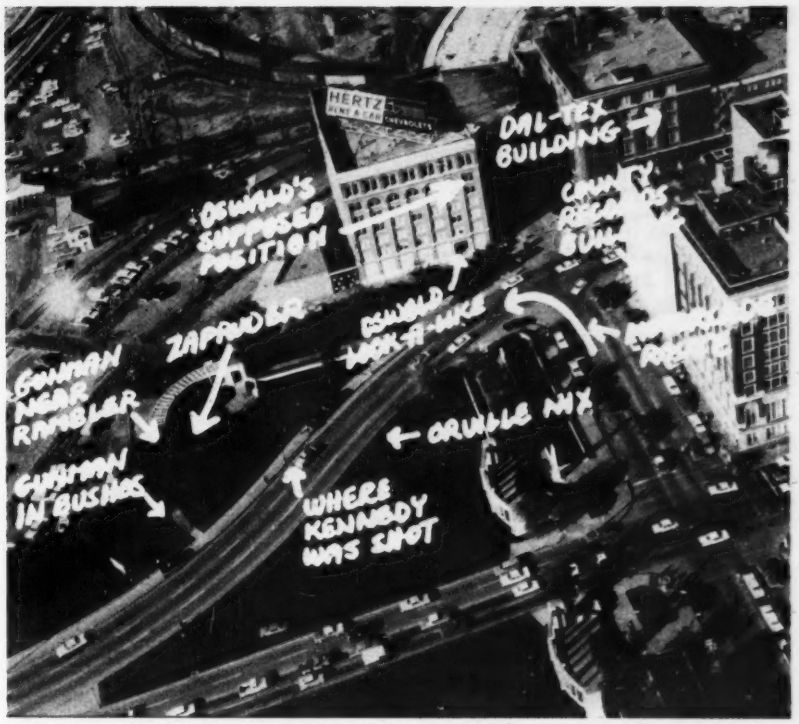
The Grassy Knoll and Other Curiosities

If the commission was willing to credit Oswald with extraordinary gifts of marksmanship and mobility, it was not quite prepared to admit he had the power of bi-location as well. Thus, the possibility of an assassin or assassins firing on the motorcade from the direction of the grassy knoll to the right of Elm Street was ruled out.

To rule it out, the commission had to discount the testimony of more than 50 witnesses, nearly a score more than those who reported shots coming from the School Book Depository. By and large, the grassy knoll witnesses were, like Lee Bowers, quite positive about what they saw or heard. More importantly, many of their stories coincided in crucial details, and the details were quite specific. S. M. Holland, who observed the scene from the overpass, reported seeing a puff of smoke near the stockade fence immediately after the shots; Bowers noted the presence of several strange cars in the parking lot in back of the knoll. In one of the cars, Bowers said, a man seemed to be speaking into something that resembled a microphone.

Films back up some of the stories. The Nix film, for instance,shows people running in the direction of the knoll immediately after the shots, while two people on the knoll itself throw themselves to the ground, to avoid being hit by more shots. The film also shows the two motorcycle officers who had been riding behind the presidential limousine dismounting and one of them running up the knoll, gun drawn.

Another policeman who ran to the knoll was Joe Smith, who had been directing traffic at the corner of Houston and Elm when he was summoned by a woman who cried, "They are shooting the President from the bushes." What Smith discovered on the knoll is the most chilling story of all. As he related his story to the FBI: "I pulled my gun from my holster and I thought, 'This is silly. I don't know who I am looking for,' and I put it back.



Just as I did, he [the man at whom Smith had been pointing his weapon] showed me he was a Secret Service agent." There is only one problem. The Secret Service's own records show there were no Secret Service men on the grassy knoll.

Indeed, a lot of people were where they shouldn't have been that day. Winston Lawson, the Secret Service agent responsible for the choice of the Kennedy motorcade route, later reported that motorcycle outriders were posted on "the left and right flanks of the President's car" (a position that would have made a cross-fire more difficult). But, as the films of the motorcade clearly indicate, the motorcycles were posted well to the rear of the President's car and, according to the Dallas police, were positioned there at Lawson's own instructions. After the shooting, when the doors of the School Book Depository were sealed, a man was "trapped inside" who didn't belong there. He was James W. Powell, an Army intelligence agent.

Across the street from the Book Depository is the Dal-Tex Building, and assassination theorists have long speculated that some of the shots on the motorcade could have come from there as well as from the Book Depository. The cops evidently had the same idea, too, because, after the shooting, they picked up a young man who had been in the building "without a good excuse," as the police report puts it. Just who the young man was is impossible to say. While the records show he was taken to the sheriff's office, his name does not appear, nor does any alibi. Evidently, he just disappeared.

The debate over what did or did not go on at both the grassy knoll and the Dal-Tex Building might well be resolved by a thorough examination of the wounds in President Kennedy's brain. Just for this reason, the brain was removed after the autopsy and "set" in Formalin. Eventually, it was transported, along with other medical evidence, to the National Archives. When Dr. Cyril Wecht, the coroner of Allegheny County, Pa., and one of the few independent experts to examine the autopsy photographs and X-rays, sought to locate the brain at the archives, he made a grisly discovery. It, too, had disappeared.

The Oswald Connection

In fixing blame for the assassination, the commission ignored the testimony of eyewitnesses and settled instead on a 24-year-old former Marine named Lee Harvey Oswald. For a country still shaken by the Cold War, Oswald fit the bill perfectly. He was a self-proclaimed Marxist who had, several years before the assassination, "defected" to the Soviet Union. When he returned, he brought a Russian wife with him. As it happened, her uncle was an official in the Soviet Secret Police. Oswald had been born in New Orleans but had grown up in the Dallas area, and it was to Dallas that he returned. One month before the assassination, he had gone to work as a stockboy in the School Book Depository.

Oswald was arrested 75 minutes after the President's murder, as he was sitting in a movie theater. Eventually, he was charged with the murders of President Kennedy and J.D. Tippit, a Dallas police officer who was shot to death not many blocks from the theater within an hour of the assassination. The evidence that Oswald committed either crime is tenuous at best.

Physical evidence linking Oswald to the assassination was strangely inconclusive. A paraffin test turned up traces of nitrates on his hands but not on his cheek, and was ultimately dismissed by both the FBI and the commission as unreliable. A partial palm print was found on the weapon, but police were unable to prove it was Oswald's. The gun itself had been purchased through the mail by an A. Hidell. Dallas police claimed that they found Oswald carrying phony identification for an A. Hidell, yet the accompanying photograph does not look like Lee Harvey Oswald.

The day of the assassination, while rummaging through a garage where Oswald kept some of his things, the police also uncovered two snapshots of Oswald standing in a back yard, a revolver strapped around his hip. In one hand he holds some socialist propaganda literature. In the other he hefts a long, scope-mounted rifle. The FBI, however, was unable to determine whether the rifle was the Carcano. Other researchers, notably Sylvia Meagher, assert that the gun Oswald holds is 2.4 inches longer than the Carcano.

In any case, there is serious question whether the man holding the rifle is Lee Harvey Oswald at all. Several professional photo analysts have flatly branded the picture as a fake. They point out that the V-shaped shadow under the nose is identical in both photos, even though Oswald's head is tilted in one and erect in another. In the first photo Oswald is standing at an angle so oddly out of kilter that, in trying to duplicate it, one invariably falls over. Other photo analysis techniques, such as the red-blue transparency test, find a disparity in the skin tones of Oswald's head and those of his arm and hands. A comparison of the head in the photograph and Oswald's head in booking photos from the Dallas Police Department reveals that the Oswald arrested in Dallas had a rather narrow, pointed chin. The chin of the man standing in the back yard seems decidedly broad and squarish, leading critics of the Warren Commission to speculate that the back yard photo is of another man, with a cropped head shot of Lee Oswald laid atop it just above the chin. Finally,

when the two back yard photographs are laid next to each other, a startling inconsistency emerges. Though the body of the second photo is smaller than the first (since the picture was taken from farther away), the size of the two heads are virtually identical. Either the pictures are fakes, planted to incriminate Oswald in the assassination, or Oswald managed to grow nearly half a foot in the few minutes between the taking of the first and the second pictures.

Against this evidence is the testimony of Marina Oswald, who told the commission she took the pictures. In this and other matters, Mrs. Oswald proved most cooperative; indeed, nearly three-quarters of the evidence against her husband comes from her testimony. Except when it conflicted with its own sequence of events, the commission accepted Mrs. Oswald's testimony at face value, despite numerous warnings from commission lawyers such as Norman Redlich that "Marina has repeatedly lied to the Secret Service, the FBI and this commission on matters which are of vital concern."

The commission's tolerance toward Marina is understandable. There were few other witnesses who could put Oswald at the scene of either murder, and those who could, for one reason or another, were less than wholly credible. Only two witnesses, for instance, claimed to have seen Oswald on the sixth floor shortly before the shots were fired. One was Howard Brennan, a 45-year-old steam fitter who was standing directly across the street from the Book Depository. Minutes before the shooting, Brennan claimed he glanced up and saw Oswald standing in a window on the sixth floor, gun in hand. Later, however, Brennan was unable to pick Oswald out of a police lineup, and the commission itself downplayed the significance of his testimony. The other witness was Charles Givens, one of Oswald's co-workers. Shortly after the assassination, Givens told the FBI that he had seen Oswald on the first floor 40 minutes before the assassination. For the next six months, Givens stuck to that story through several interrogations. Not until commission lawyer David Belin interviewed him on April 8, 1964, did Givens suddenly recall that he had forgotten his cigarettes on the sixth floor and, when he went to retrieve them shortly before noon, spotted Oswald and exchanged a few words with him. Belin, the lawyer who elicited Givens' sudden switch in testimony, recently went to work as chief counsel on the Rockefeller Commission investigating the CIA.

Oswald himself claimed that he was eating lunch on the first floor of the School Book Depository at the time of the assassination. Within two minutes of the actual shooting, police discovered him calmly sipping a Coke on the second floor. According to the commission, Oswald fled from his sniper's perch, rearranged the shield of boxes he had set up around the window, wiped his fingerprints off the murder weapon, hid the rifle, ran down four flights of stairs and bought a bottle of Coke—all within 80 seconds.

In 1969 Jesse Curry, who had been chief of the Dallas Police Department at the time of the assassination, said: "We don't have any proof that Oswald fired the rifle. No one has been able to put him in that building with the gun in his hand." No one, Curry should have said, except the Warren Commission.

Secret Agent Man

Almost from the moment of Oswald's arrest, rumors wafted through Dallas and Washington that the accused assassin was an agent for one or more intelligence agencies. The rumors were fed by the fact that the notebook Oswald was carrying with him at the time of his arrest carried the name, license and telephone number of James Hosty, a Dallas-based FBI man who had visited Oswald's household several times. There was no question about the visits. Hosty himself confirmed them, explaining that they were a routine part of keeping track of known subversives. What was more troubling to the commission was the suggestion that Oswald was not only under the surveillance of the FBI but in its employ.

The rumors became formal allegations when Waggoner Carr, the Texas attorney general, passed them on to the Warren Commission. Carr, who said he had gotten his information from reliable informants (they turned out to be on the staff of the Dallas D.A.), said that Oswald collected $200 every month from the FBI as an informer and that his Bureau identification number was 179.

Carr's information sent shock waves through the commission. Just how seriously the members of the commission viewed the story is shown in a "TOP SECRET" transcript of a closed commission meeting. The recently declassified transcript quotes an alarmed J. Lee Rankin, chief counsel for the commission, saying, "We do have a dirty rumor that is very bad for the Commission . . . and it is very damaging for the agencies that are involved in it and it must be wiped out insofar as it is possible to do so by this Commission." The problem, as commission member and former CIA Director Allen Dulles quickly notes, is how to go about it, since, if Oswald were an FBI agent, Hoover would claim he wasn't. Or as Dulles aptly puts it: "I think under any circumstances. . . Mr. Hoover would certainly say he didn't have anything to do with this fellow. . . . If he [Hoover] says no, I didn't have anything to do with it, you can't prove what the facts are." When Dulles' fellow commissioners ask him whether he would lie, even under oath, if he were put in the same spot, Dulles bluntly tells them yes, as would any official in the CIA.

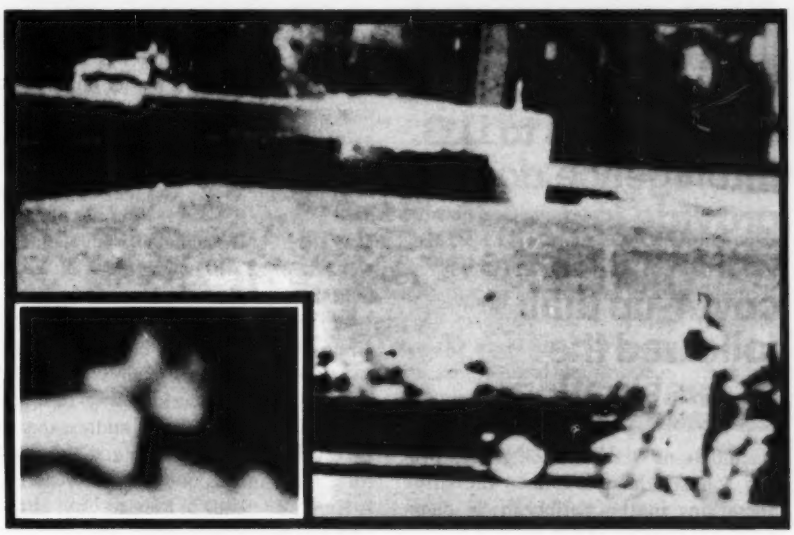
For whatever it is worth, then, Hoover and the CIA both dutifully denied that Oswald had ever been their agent. All that remains to contradict them is a series of unlikely events, which, depending on how they are construed, make a powerful case for coincidence or conspiracy.

First, there is the matter of Oswald's Marine record. One of his duty stations overseas was Atsugi, Japan, where he worked as a radar operator and learned Russian, or so it is said, in his spare time. According to those familiar with the workings of the agency, Atsugi is one of the largest CIA bases in the world. In the past, it has been the launching pad for covert operators dropped into Communist China, as well as a base for the agency's U-2s. If Oswald worked at Atsugi, the argument goes, he was almost surely an agency man.

Then, there is the manner of Oswald's leave-taking from the Marine Corps. In September 1959 Oswald applied for a hardship discharge on the ground that his mother had been injured. (A box dropped on her foot at work; she was back at work a few days later.) The discharge was granted three days later—a record time, according to Marine Corps officers. According to the critics, it was the CIA who set the record.

Once home, Oswald spent three days with his mother before leaving for New Orleans, the first stop on a hegira to the Soviet Union. According to the Warren Commission, Oswald paid $1,500 plus for his passage from money saved from the Marine Corps. But Oswald's bank account showed a balance of exactly $203. The question is where the rest came from.

Oswald supposedly took a ship to England and made the next leg of his journey—London to Helsinki—by plane. Sylvia Meagher, who matched up the entry date stamped on Oswald's passport in London with the time his commercial flight was said to have departed for Helsinki, found that the plane left a day *before* Oswald arrived in England. The



Top, Zapruder frame 413. At the bottom right the head of a man seems to emerge from the leaves. If you look harder, you can see a rifle pointing toward the top left-hand corner—or can you? Bottom, the Nix film. A man, apparently bracing himself on the roof of a car, seems to be aiming a gun in the direction of the President.

only plausible explanation is that Oswald reached Finland by noncommercial means. In the minds of the critics, the CIA made the means available.

Two weeks after his arrival in Russia, Oswald showed up at the American Embassy to make two startling declarations: he was renouncing his American citizenship, and he was going to turn over his knowledge of radar secrets to the Russians. The revelations did not seem to cause a ripple of concern. In any case, when Oswald applied for a new passport two years later, it was routinely granted, along with a loan of several hundred dollars to get home. At the time of Oswald's return to the United States—1962—the CIA was questioning ordinary tourists about what they had seen in Russia. Oswald, the defector and self-proclaimed betrayer of military secrets, was merely met at the plane by Spas T. Raikin, whom the Warren Commission identified as an official of the Travellers Aid. What the commission did not note is that Mr. Raikin was the former secretary general of the American Friends of Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations, a group with extensive ties to intelligence agencies in the Far East and Europe.

Back in Texas, Oswald and Marina were taken under the wing of Dallas's large and heavily CIA-infiltrated White Russian community. Few people extended more kindnesses to the Oswalds than George deMohrenshildt, a wealthy oil geologist who boasted that he had worked for French intelligence during the war. DeMohrenshildt took the Oswalds to parties and introduced the young unskilled worker and his bride to his circle of socially prominent friends. Quite possibly, deMohrenshildt also reminisced about the eight-month hiking trip he and his wife had recently taken in 1960 through Central America. Such tale-telling would not be unusual. According to the Warren Commission, deMohrenshildt had already filed a lengthy written and filmed report of his travels with "The U.S. Government." By "happenstance," the commission writes, the deMohrenshildts' travel itinerary put them in Guatemala City (the jumping-off point for the invaders) at the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion.

Despite the aid of people like the deMohrenshildts, Oswald was apparently unable to get and keep steady work. At least, that was the stated reason why he moved to New Orleans in April of 1963. Oswald did not fare much better on the job market, but he did come in contact with some interesting people. One of them, according to nine witnesses including several law officers, was Clay Shaw. Although Shaw's participation in an assassination conspiracy has never been proven to anyone's satisfaction, Garrison did make a convincing case that Shaw was connected to the CIA, which would hardly be unusual since both New Orleans and the Trade Mart of which Shaw was director are centers of CIA activity in the Caribbean. Moreover, Victor Marchetti, the former executive assistant to CIA Director Richard Helms and author of *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, now quotes Helms as telling his senior staff people at the time of the Garrison trial that Shaw had been a "contract" employee of the agency.

It was in New Orleans that Oswald became involved with the pro-Castro Fair Play for Cuba Committee. Once, while distributing FPCC leaflets, Oswald became involved in an altercation with anti-Castro activists. After a brief brawl, Oswald was arrested for disturbing the peace and hauled into a police station. He made one request: "I want to see the FBI." An agent quickly appeared, and Oswald was released the next day after paying a $10 fine.

If it is unusual for a self-proclaimed "Marxist" to demand to see the FBI, it is no more out of character than Oswald's other labors on behalf of Castro's Cuba. Some of Oswald's leaflets, for instance, were stamped with the ad-

dress "544 Camp Street." The commission could find no evidence that Oswald ever kept an office at that address, but in its search it found that an *anti*-Castro group had. That group was the Cuban Revolutionary Committee, a CIA creation put together by none other than E. Howard Hunt.

In late September 1963, Oswald left by bus from New Orleans to Mexico City, where he hoped to obtain a travel visa to Cuba. On October 10 the CIA sent a cable to the State Department and the Office of Naval Intelligence, informing them that a "reliable and sensitive source" had reported that Leon "Henry" Oswald had been seen entering the Soviet Embassy. The CIA said it had reason to believe that this was the same L.H. Oswald who lived in Texas and had once defected to the Soviet Union, and requested that State and ONI furnish pictures of Oswald so that the identity could be confirmed. In its cable the CIA describes Oswald as "approximately 35 years old, six feet tall, athletically built, with a receding hairline." Later, the CIA released pictures of the Mexico City "Oswald." The only resemblance between this "Oswald" and the Oswald arrested in Dallas a month later was the receding hairline. So far, the best explanation the CIA has offered for the affair is that it was a "mixup."

If it were truly a mixup, it bears some explanation. Oswald did, in fact, travel to Mexico City, and his name appears on a visa application filed with the Soviet Embassy. Confirmation comes both from embassy records and from one William G. Gaudet, whose name immediately follows Oswald's on the roster of Mexican travel permits. The Oswald-Gaudet sequence is another one of those coincidences that seemed to have dogged Lee Harvey Oswald throughout his life. For Mr. Gaudet, who lists his occupation as editor of the *Latin American Traveller*, is also an admitted former employee of the CIA.

Another "mixup" that fascinates critics of the Warren Commission occurred during a news conference held by Dallas D.A. Henry Wade while Oswald was in custody. Twice during the conference, Wade announced that Oswald was a member of the "Free Cuba Committee," a serious slip of the tongue, since that committee is a violently anti-Castro group. At last, though, a friendly voice in the back of the room corrected Wade and informed him that Oswald was, in fact, a member of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. The friendly voice belonged to a strip-joint proprietor named Jack Ruby.

Taken singly, any one of these happenings can be written off to simple chance. Taken together, they form a mosaic of a man in, around, aided and abetted by intelligence agencies of one sort or another throughout the last six years of his life.

Deduction, however, is not proof. And, in the absence of official explanation, the common-sense linking of a series of incredible occurrences is all that is left to critics of the Warren Commission. The recent disclosures that the FBI was involved in the wholesale planting and buying of double agents in radical groups during the 1960s, coupled with the revelations that the CIA was involved not once but several times in assassination plots against Castro and, according to *Time* magazine, carried out such plots against Francois Duvalier and Rafael Trujillo, provides added impetus to critics who are ready, in any case, to blame most of the world's troubles on the machinations of U.S. intelligence. Lyndon Johnson himself termed the CIA's operations in the Caribbean "a damn murder incorporated."

What Oswald's connections to U.S. intelligence *do* provide is a rationale for the cover-up that followed the assassination

All the same, there is, at this moment, not a shred of credible evidence that links either the CIA or the FBI to the planning and carrying out of John Kennedy's murder. What Oswald's connections to U.S. intelligence *do* provide is a rationale for the cover-up that followed the assassination. For, whether or not Oswald was part of an assassination conspiracy, there was, after his murder, no convenient way for an intelligence agency to explain that, while Oswald had been in their employ, he was not acting at their behest on the 22nd of November, 1963. The "dirty rumors" that so terrified the Warren Commission would always exist. There remained only one solution. The rumors, as Rankin told the commission, "must be wiped out." Clumsily, stupidly, the Warren Commission set out to do just that.

The Ubiquitous Mr. Hunt

Lee Harvey Oswald was not the only suspect the police arrested that day in Dallas. Nine other men were picked up after the assassination and, after questioning, quickly turned loose. There is a photo of the cops leading away three of the men from the scene. Just who they were is officially unknown; they were released before anyone bothered to take their names. In the Warren Commission report, they are referred to as "tramps." In the photo one of those tramps bears a passing resemblance to Frank Sturgis, one of the Watergate Cubans. The older man looks remarkably like America's favorite spy: author, burglar, blackmailer, assassination devotee E. Howard Hunt.

The resemblance is so striking that some assassination buffs, notably comedian Dick Gregory, have charged that the photograph not only looks like E. Howard Hunt but *is* E. Howard Hunt. The staff of the Rockefeller CIA Commission, headed by David Belin, has obligingly promised to check the matter out. Belin's eagerness to investigate is understandable. For although the photo of one of the tramps looks a bit like Hunt today, it resembles him not at all 11 and a half years ago. More to the point, Hunt has an ironclad alibi. At the moment John Kennedy was killed, he was having lunch in Washington.

Other details about Hunt and his circle of Cuban friends, however, are not so easily explained. Hunt's path and Oswald's have a curious way of overlapping. The New Orleans address shared by the Hunt Cuban group and Fair Play for Cuba is merely one example. Another is Hunt's presence in Mexico City, as the CIA's acting station chief, when Oswald showed up looking for a visa, the same visit that touched off the mysterious CIA cables about a look-alike Oswald who, in fact, did not look like Oswald at all.

For Hunt to be involved, however peripherally, with Oswald and the events surrounding the assassination is perfectly in keeping with Hunt's image of himself as the master spy and conspirator. In *Give Us This Day*, his account of the Bay of Pigs invasion (in which he served as the CIA's political officer), Hunt writes bitterly of the invasion's "betrayal" at the hands of Kennedy, who, according to Hunt, sought "to whitewash the New Frontier by heaping guilt on the CIA." The betrayal, as far as Hunt and his Cuban comrades were concerned, involved Kennedy's stopping of air support and an assassination attempt on Castro that was to coincide with the landing. The Bay of Pigs was not the first time Hunt recommended assassination, or the last. In 1960 Hunt tried to sell a Castro as-

The familiar photograph of Oswald holding the murder weapon (a *Life* cover in 1964) may be a fake. An enlargement (middle) reveals a much stronger chin than the pointed cleft one in Oswald's police mug shot (far left). Experts believe a photo of Oswald's head might have been placed on top of a photograph of another man just above the chin line.

sassination plot to the Eisenhower administration, but was turned down. In 1965, according to journalist Tad Szulc, Hunt was back with another Castro assassination scheme. This time the plot, in which a bearded Cuban physician named Rolando Cubela was to be the trigger man, went forward, only to be foiled at the last minute by Lyndon Johnson's decision to invade the Dominican Republic. Hunt apparently had these plots in mind when he wrote to the White House in 1972 about his participation in "many illegal conspiracies"—conspiracies that might come to light if funds for his defense and the support of his family were not quickly forthcoming.

Hunt, of course, was not the only anti-Castroite with a fondness for assassination. Frank Sturgis—alias Fiorini—a former gunrunner and casino operator in Cuba, was also an aficionado. Unlike Hunt, Sturgis did come to the attention of the Warren Commission. In tracing Oswald's background, the commission came across stories that Oswald had, both in New Orleans and Miami, tried to infiltrate *anti*-Castro refugee groups. One story had it that Oswald had tried to become part of an anti-Castro raiding party; another, that he had been exposed as an infiltrator and been in a fight with a Cuban in Miami; yet a third, that he had been in contact with Cuban intelligence. The truth or falsity of any of these tales is less interesting than their source. The Warren Commission placed them at the doorstep of Hunt's old pal, Frank Sturgis.

This time, the coincidence could be legitimate. The history of pro-Castro and anti-Castro plotting and counterplotting is so tangled that it is virtually impossible to sort out who was doing what to whom and why at any one time. The cast of characters is enormous. There is even evidence that Jack Ruby ran guns for the anti-Castro Cubans. And the list stretches on. Does it mean anything? Could Hunt and Sturgis have been involved in Kennedy's assassination? One can only guess. The Warren Commission failed even to ask the questions.

Too Many Oswalds

For a man who supposedly committed the crime of the century, Lee Harvey Oswald behaved rather oddly. Before the assassination, he seemed to go out of his way to call attention to himself—getting in fights, stirring up a fuss at a shooting range, boasting to a car salesman that he would soon be coming into a "lot of money." These incidents have two things in common. Oswald always identified himself quite loudly, and later the people he had been involved with had trouble identifying him. The incident with the car salesman is especially interesting. First, Oswald did not drive. Second, on November 9, 1963, the day he was supposedly in a car dealership in Dallas, the commission puts him at home in Irving, Texas, writing a letter to the Soviet Embassy. There are other inconsistencies. On September 25, 1963, for instance, Oswald, according to the commission, was riding a bus to Mexico City. Yet, on the same day, a man calling himself Lee Harvey Oswald walked into the Selective Service Office in Austin, Texas, saying he wanted to discuss his dishonorable discharge.

In 1966 Richard Popkin, a college professor in St. Louis, concluded on the basis of these and other strange occurrences that there were *two* Oswalds, and that the phony Oswald had been employed to frame the *real* Lee Harvey Oswald. Popkin's thesis has a certain tidy logic to it. For one thing, it explains how Oswald could have been in two places at once. For another, it shows how a poor marksman could have hit a moving target at a range of 280 feet. For a third, it explains how Lee Harvey Oswald, a man who did not know how to drive, took a car for a test spin at speeds of up to 70 miles per hour.

The "two Oswald" theory also makes some sense out of the CIA's "mix-up" in Mexico City. Interestingly, a man identified as "Leon" Oswald, but fitting the description the CIA issued from Mexico City, showed up in the company of two other men at the home of Sylvia Odio, an anti-Castro Cuban living in Dallas, two months before the assassination. The men who passed themselves off as anti-Castroites said that it would be a good idea to have Kennedy assassinated. Two months later, when Sylvia Odio heard that a man named Lee Harvey Oswald had been arrested for President Kennedy's assassination, she fainted.

Now, Peter Dale Scott, a professor at Berkeley, and one of the most respected and meticulous of the assassination theorists, has come up with a new

wrinkle on the Popkin thesis: not two Oswalds, but several.

Scott bases his conclusion on a study of Oswald photographs collected by the commission. The photograph on the passport Oswald used to enter the Soviet Union is especially striking. It surely shows somebody, but it does not appear to be Lee Harvey Oswald. The chin, facial, nose and bone structure all are wrong.

Scott has also collected the records of Oswald's physical examinations from the time he enlisted in the Marine Corps to the autopsy following his murder. They reveal some seemingly inexplicable dissimilarities. A Marine Corps medical examination conducted on October 24, 1956, for instance, found that Lee Harvey Oswald was 5′ 8″ tall, 135 pounds, with hazel eyes. Three years later, on September 11, 1959, another Marine exam puts him at 5′ 11″ tall, 150 pounds, with grey eyes. Of course, Oswald could have grown three inches, gained 15 pounds, and changed the color of his eyes in three years, but it seems unlikely. Altogether impossible is the change recorded on July 13, 1962, during a job physical Oswald took at Leslie Welding Co. That examination shows him to be 5′ 9″ tall—a *loss* of two inches in three years. In the arrest bulletin that went out for Oswald on November 22, he was described as 5′ 10″ tall and weighing 165 pounds—the description that is carried in the FBI files as well. At his autopsy, Oswald was found to be 5′ 9″ tall, 150 pounds, with grey-blue eyes.

One possible explanation for these differences is that there never was a real Lee Harvey Oswald, or, if there were, he died well before the first Lee Harvey Oswald entered the Marine Corps. From there on, the name and persona of Lee Harvey Oswald became an identity of convenience to be used by an intelligence agency or agencies unknown, a common enough practice among intelligence groups around the world.

Bizarre as the hydra-headed Oswald notion sounds, it was taken quite seriously by J. Edgar Hoover—two and a half years before the assassination. On June 3, 1960, Hoover sent a confidential memorandum to the Department of State, raising the possibility that an imposter might be using the credentials of Oswald, who was then living in the Soviet Union. The Hoover memo sparked other memos within the State Department. None of the correspondence on the possibility of an Oswald imposter was ever forwarded to the Warren Commission. Instead, it was buried in the National Archives and only uncovered recently. W. David Slawson, a lawyer who checked out rumors about Oswald for the Warren Commission, offers one explanation as to how the file on the counterfeit Oswald managed to disappear. "It conceivably could have been something related to the CIA," says Slawson. "I can only speculate now—but a general CIA effort to take out anything that reflected on them may have covered this up."

It is a chilling thesis, and, like so much about Dallas, it makes just enough sense not to be ruled out.

Who Done It?

There are no answers, of course, only theories, and they range from the unlikely to the obscene. There is a conspiracy to fit every taste and prejudice. The trouble is that, since Dallas, Vietnam and Watergate, few of them can be easily dismissed out of hand. For a time, the CIA itself considered the possibility that Oswald was some sort of "Manchurian Candidate," a sleeper assassin planted to go off on command. The theory, like all the others, made for interesting conversation around the watercoolers at Langley, but, if the CIA ever followed up on the notion, there is no evidence. Within the last few months, a novel, entitled *The Tears of Autumn*, has been published, putting forward the supposition that Kennedy was the victim of a revenge killing for the CIA-approved assassination of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem, who was slain in Saigon less than a month before Kennedy went to Dallas. One obvious problem with *The Tears of Autumn* plot is the timing. A few weeks' time seems hardly sufficient to concoct and execute as sophisticated a conspiracy as that which occurred November 22, 1963, in Dallas. Variations of "foreign agents did it" has long held considerable appeal for a number of Americans, including the unlikely duo of Lyndon Johnson and Jack Anderson, both of whom pointed the finger in the direction of Castro. Basically, the argument goes that Castro finally tired of the various U.S. attempts to rub him out, and, as a self-protective device, launched a pre-emotive strike of his own. The argument, though, flies in the face of Castro's grudging admiration, even fondness, for Kennedy. More to the point, it is difficult to imagine as wily a leader as Castro risking annihilation not only of his regime but of his entire island had he been linked to such a plot.

The agency and the mob have enjoyed a cozy relationship since World War II, when the Cosa Nostra protected U.S. ports from Axis sabotage

There is far more disposition, if no more evidence, to blame the CIA, either the top leadership of the agency or an ultra-right faction, which used the agency as a cover. The latter theory centers on the belief that there are really two CIAs: the "good" CIA, composed of the tweedy, analyst types, who tend to be liberal, have gone to good schools, and were born somewhere in the Northeast; and the "bad" CIA, the operations boys who are always off smuggling opium, or training secret armies, and who didn't go to such good schools. This thesis is one of the enduring notions about the agency and has been the subject of two minor best sellers, *Last Man at Arlington* (in which the Kennedy assassination provided a backdrop for a number of mysterious murders), and *Six Days of the Condor* (soon to be *Three Days of the Condor*, starring Robert Redford). More seriously, novelist Gore Vidal, writing in *The New York Review of Books*, finds, after an examination of E. Howard Hunt's novels, that Hunt's prose sounds remarkably like that of Arthur Bremer, the would-be assassin of George Wallace. Hunt, of course, was an operations man at the CIA and thus one of the bad guys. Moreover, Hunt has some experience at forging documents connected with assassinations. At the suggestion of Chuck Colson, Hunt fabricated cables linking Kennedy to the assassination of Diem, which Colson then tried to peddle to the press. The attempt backfired, but Vidal finds it more than passing strange that recent assassins—Sirhan, Oswald and Bremer—all showed a penchant for leaving written evidence linking them to their alleged crimes. The question Vidal poses is whether they might have had benefit of a ghostwriter.

For one reason or another, none of these theories—these outrageous slanders-really washes. Besides the lack of evidence, the "CIA did it" theory is simply "too pat," too easily tailored to existing prejudices. The most serious investigators of the assassination are reluctant to point a finger anywhere. They are also the most pessimistic that the real murderers of John Kennedy will ever be found. There is a growing suspicion that Oswald—or whoever he was—was merely the first of many "patsies," a word Oswald chose to describe himself. The CIA,

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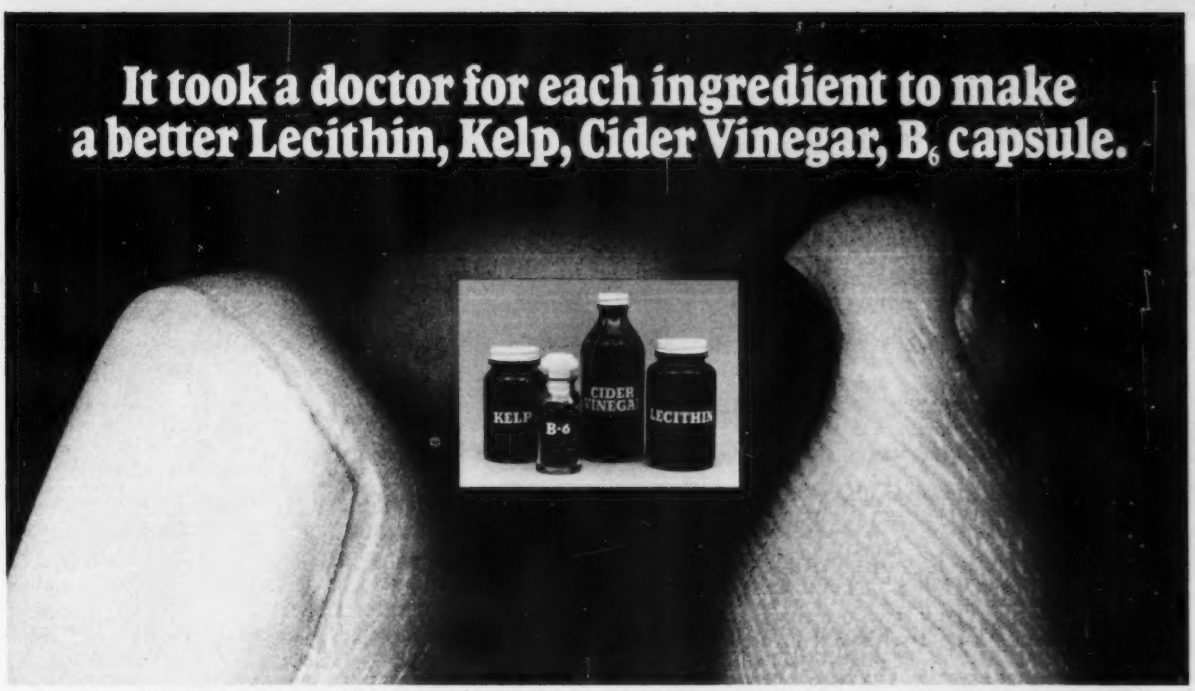

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whom both the right and left have reason to hate, may be the next.

In the classic murder, the assailant must have motive, means and opportunity (another reason to doubt Oswald's guilt; he apparently had none of them). There were many people, groups—and countries, for that matter—that had reason to want John Kennedy dead. But the means and the opportunity must also be present. As a first step, the killers would have to have been able to neutralize the Dallas Police Department (more difficult than it seems). They would have to have been of sufficient stature to dissuade other investigative agencies, notably the FBI and CIA, from going after them, because their exposure would do greater harm to the government and that wonderful catchall, "the public interest," than their actual apprehension. They would have to have had access to skilled, sophisticated trigger men. And that would have taken money, a great deal of money, without subsequent accounting.

As it happens, organized crime fits all these requirements exactly. Certainly, there was motive. The loss of casinos and heroin connections in Cuba because of the regime Kennedy refused to dislodge has been reckoned in the hundreds of millions of dollars a year. Robert Kennedy's pursuit of organized crime had already seriously damaged the mob, especially in New Orleans, the terminus for the Cuban drug connection. And there were indications that the Kennedy brothers were going to hit Nevada next.

As for means, the mob has both the guns and the money to hire them. The opportunity was there for the taking.

The agency and the mob have enjoyed a cozy relationship since World War II, when the Cosa Nostra protected U.S. ports from Axis sabotage, as well as aided in the Allied invasions of Sicily and Italy. The agency returned the favor in various ways. In the late '50s Robert Kennedy, then an investigator for the McClellan committee, encountered a mobster in Las Vegas, who boasted, "You can't touch me, I've got immunity" from the CIA. Incredulous, Kennedy checked; the mobster was telling the truth. Later, during the Vietnam war, CIA aircraft ferried opium out of Southeast Asia; eventually the mob sold it as heroin on American streets. In 1971, during a little-noticed trial of 11 members of a Cosa Nostra family in federal court in New York, the defense called a surprise character witness: the chief of the CIA's local office. The mobsters were not convicted. One indication of the closeness of the relationship between the agency and the mob is that the CIA maintains its largest U.S. office (outside Washington) in little old Las Vegas. "You can bet," says one source close to the agency, "that it isn't for the desert air." The explanation for the CIA-Mafia ties, says one veteran observer of the agency, is that the mob can perform certain "assignments" which the agency either cannot or is unwilling to undertake. In 1961 Robert Kennedy discovered that the agency had put out an assassination contract on Fidel Castro, and that the hit men were from the mob. Kennedy quickly stopped it.

Given that background, some critics of the Warren Commission contend that the mob, after murdering Kennedy, employed its long-standing "immunity" to cut off CIA and other federal investigation of the assassination.

Unlikely as this scenario sounds, it dovetails nicely with the unanswered questions about Jack Ruby. According to the Warren Commission, Ruby was a rather innocent, if highly deranged, saloon keeper whose most noticeable

Cuba, crime and the CIA. The three things that everyone connected to the assassination has in common

vice seems to have been a bit of social gambling. The commission flatly rejected the oft-repeated accusation that Ruby had ties to organized crime. The commission ignored testimony before it by a Dallas police detective that he "regarded Jack Ruby as a source of information in connection with his investigatory activities." In short, Ruby was, as Scott notes, a police informant, specifically in the area of narcotics. Scott also points out that the commission ignored a report to the FBI seven years before the assassination that Ruby was providing the okays from the mob for independent operators to move drugs in and out of Dallas. At that, the commission hardly needed to read reports. Ruby's connections with the mob and with the police were common knowledge in Dallas. Even a former Dallas county sheriff detailed Ruby's background; once again, the commission ignored him. Instead, the commission blandly asserted that Ruby's friendships with criminals "throughout his life . . . were limited largely to professional gamblers." Ironically, there was one place where Ruby truly was interested in gambling: Havana, Cuba.

Cuba, crime and the CIA. The three things that everyone connected to the assassination has in common. The three things the Warren Commission did not want to hear about. They had their killer before the investigation started. If he lacked a motive, they would provide it. Oswald, according to the commission, killed Kennedy because of general feelings of inadequacy. At Gerald Ford's insistence, the commission added Oswald's being a communist as a reason for murder. Marina testified that it was all a terrible mistake, that Lee really wanted to kill Connally, missed, and shot Kennedy instead. The commission should have added that to the list as well. It makes just as much sense.

It is a confusing, disheartening, ultimately maddening business, this search for the killers of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. The people who look are strange, obsessive types, as people should be who have worked in a grave so long. One man who did some of the earliest and best research into the assassination, and kept repeating that research endlessly, with no one listening, finally went mad with paranoia.

Fortunately, the disbelief is spreading. It is the little old ladies, not just the crazies, who are asking questions now. Where once the commission could count on the name and probity of its chairman to certify a preposterous scenario of events, today the mention of Earl Warren's commission brings laughter on college campuses. Ironically, the media have been the last to question the official version of events. The New York *Times*, which published its own edition of the Warren Commission report and a follow-up volume entitled *The Witnesses* (from which nearly all the dissenting testimony had been carefully excised), continues to stoutly defend the commission's report. Time Inc., which owns the original and hence clearest copy of the Zapruder film, keeps it locked away in a vault. On television the most comprehensive defense of the commission has come from four one-hour specials produced by CBS. The correspondent was that Watergate tiger, Dan Rather. It may be changing. With Watergate behind them, the investigative reporters are having a second look. As one assassination researcher puts it: "We are one Seymour Hersh story away from a new investigation."

America is different now than it was in 1963. Castro is a curiosity. The doubts don't need to be laid to rest. The "dirty rumors" have become all too true. What hasn't changed is the loss. We need to know why. ●

The arrest machine

Vermont's Paul Lawrence may have been the busiest narcotics agent in the country—and the most dishonest. Now that he himself faces 4-8 years behind bars, officials are having to protect him from his victims

By Robert D. Kaplan

There was a small chorus of groans when defense attorney John J. Welch Jr. approached the microphone in a Burlington, Vermont, courtroom last February for his final summation. After eight days of the lawyer's metaphoric outbursts, characterized by one observer as "word salad," the crowd knew what was coming. Shaking his finger at the jury, he began: "The prosecution hasn't cut the mustard with the garbage it's brought into this courtroom, nothing but a motley collection of X-rated people trying to send my client on a one-way trip to Palookaville while the long-haired scum he tried to bring to justice go free. . . ." His voice cracking, Welch started to scream: "Justice, ladies and gentlemen, justice in this state is a joke."

But the hysterics didn't work. After two hours and fifteen minutes of deliberation, the jury returned two guilty verdicts against Welch's client, veteran undercover narcotics agent Paul D. Lawrence, for lying to a fellow police officer and swearing to a false drug arrest affidavit. On March 28 he was sentenced to a 4-8 year prison term on those charges. He still faces 12 other perjury counts, and even more charges are reportedly forthcoming.

Bob Kaplan has covered the Lawrence case for the Rutland (Vt.) Herald.

For over 600 young Vermonters arrested by Lawrence during his eight-year stint as a policeman, "justice," as Welch unwittingly said, was indeed a joke. As legal authorities now tell it, all 600 were probably innocent.

The emotional wreckage in Lawrence's wake was predictably severe. One young man arrested by him last year, allegedly for selling the undercover agent a small amount of barbiturates, was adamant in his insistence on his innocence and refused to cop a plea. "He was a person with raw courage," said his lawyer. Raw courage cost him and his family plenty. The young man was convicted and sentenced to a year in prison. After he'd spent 13 days in jail, his mother was able to raise $500 for a $5,000 surety bond by mortgaging the family trailer. But the family's problems were far from over; the mother claims that local police soon began harassing them. Because of the son's criminal record, he had trouble finding a job. He was also denied unemployment insurance.

Things were even worse for Louis Tanuis. His family didn't believe his claim that he was innocent of selling a small amount of hashish to Lawrence, and they ostracized him. Distraut, Tanuis copped a plea and spent seven months in jail. When he finally got out, he was unable to get a job because of his status as a parolee.

The stories go on and on. Another St. Albans youth, charged by Lawrence with selling speed, got off with a suspended sentence, but his mother suffered a nervous breakdown. A former local high school student body president, the owner of a St. Albans cafe, was busted and had great difficulty getting a liquor license. A graduate from a nearby state teachers' college was denied a license to teach and confined to the state for four years following his tangle with Lawrence.

Many of those convictions have now been thrown out. Authorities say that Lawrence never met—and wouldn't be able to recognize—scores of those he testified sold him drugs. One of the provisions of Lawrence's recent sentencing hearing, incidentally, is that the former narcotics agent be transferred from a local jail to a federal facility in as short a time as possible; in the meantime, to protect Lawrence from the numerous inmates he was responsible for putting behind bars, he is being held in maximum security in the town of St. Johnsbury. For obvious reasons, a case by case review of Lawrence's arrests is now a certainty.

But the matter hardly ends there. Two weeks after the Lawrence story reached the national press in March, a group of lawyers representing some 40 of the narc's bust victims, filed million dollar suits against Lawrence and a slew of other officials, including the former Vermont attorney general, all of whom were involved in a tale as bizarre and pathetic as the defense attorney's closing argument.

Lawrence's law enforcement career began in 1966, when he joined the Burlington Police Department as a uniformed patrolman. Two years later, he moved up to the state police, with whom he would serve four years. It was while he was with the state force that complaints about Lawrence first started coming in. In late 1971, upon receiving disturbing reports about Lawrence's arrest methods, state police brass ordered him transferred from the Rutland barracks to the small, central Vermont town of Bethel, where he was allowed only to answer phones and work the switchboard.

One incident from his brief career in Bethel is illustrative of Lawrence's approach to the job. After two weeks at the

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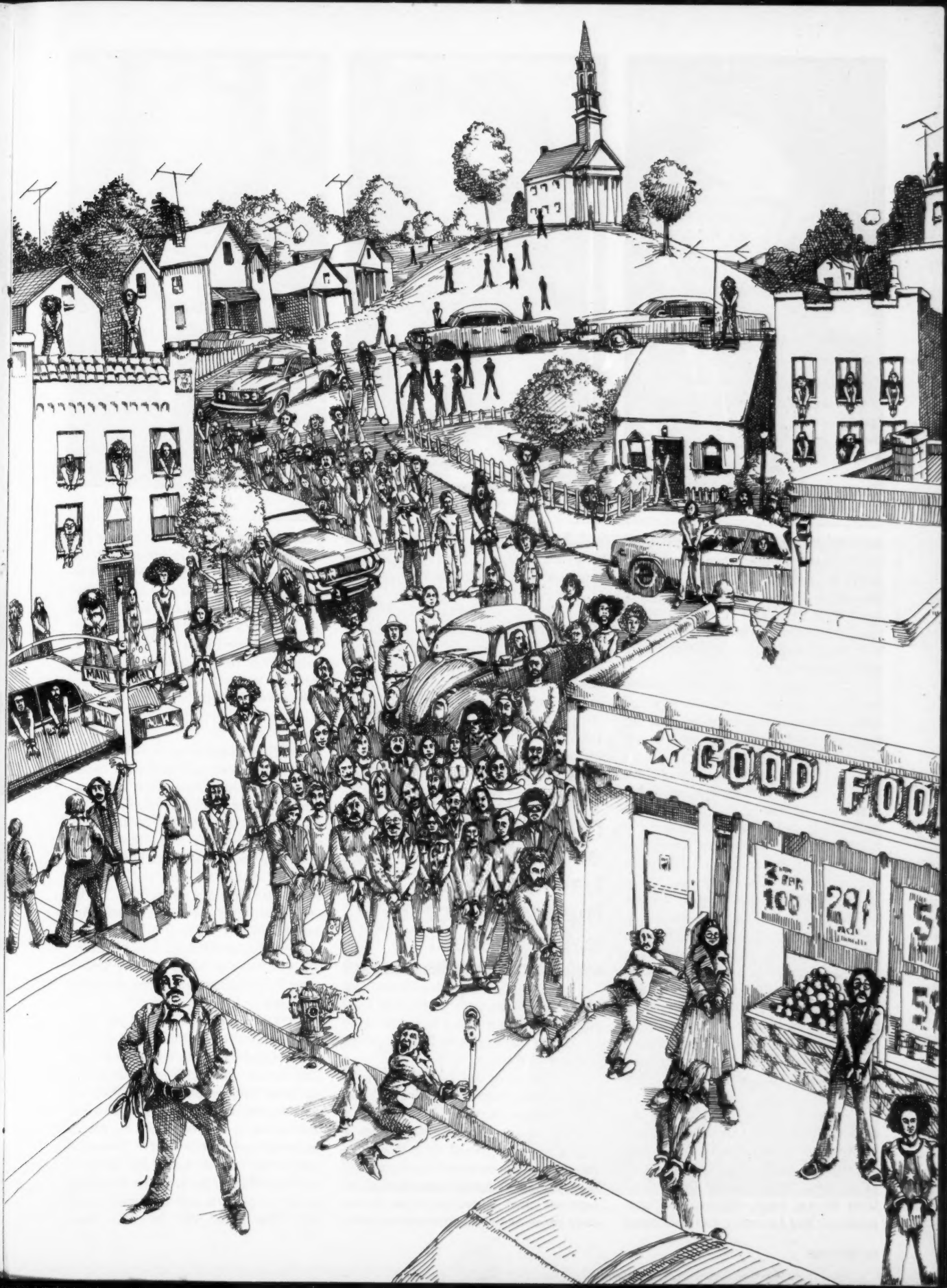
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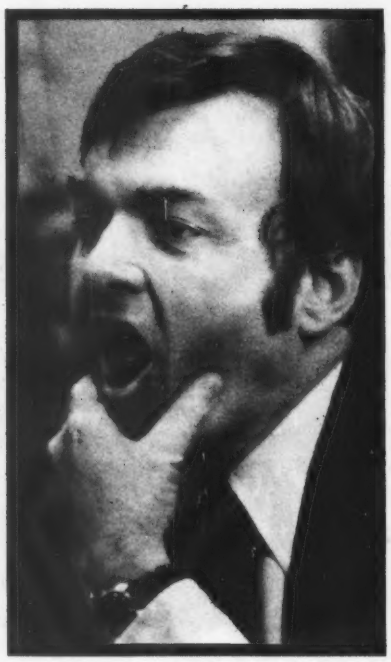
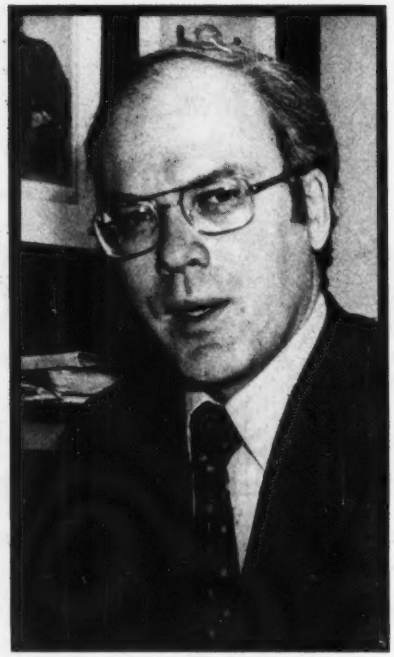



Lawrence helped defeat Vt. Attorney General Cheney (left), embarrass Gov. Salmon (center) and elect Sen. Leahy (right).

switchboard, the cop saw an opportunity to get out of the office when a document had to be picked up at a nearby location. He volunteered for the assignment and was told to be back in 10 minutes. Lawrence returned in 10 minutes all right—with both the document and a guy he'd busted for drugs en route.

"I thought you were only supposed to pick up the document," his superior complained. Lawrence replied that he couldn't turn his back on crime in the streets.

"They let the animal out of the cage for a few minutes and look what happened," says Robert Tepper, the Rutland County state's attorney at the time.

But there were other aspects of Lawrence's character that didn't jibe with the fanatic lawman image. He was, for instance, well-known for dipping into his evidence bag to get a buzz once in a while. One time, after indulging in wine and cocaine with an attractive young lady, she rebuffed his physical advances, so he had her busted for selling heroin. (The young woman, now a Buffalo, N.Y., research psychologist who testified against Lawrence at the trial, was characterized by Welch as "just another coke sniffer who Paul was trying to bring to justice.")

In 1972 Lawrence quit the police force and took up as a traveling salesman for Reynolds Tobacco, a position he held less than a year; in early '73, after a load of cigarettes mysteriously disappeared from his car trunk—Reynolds officials suspected that Lawrence had bootlegged the goods—he was let go. So he returned to police work, this time as chief of a four-man force in the small Champlain Valley town of Vergennes. "Paul Lawrence was," according to Mary Stone, the Vergennes town clerk and treasurer, "the most personable, smooth-talking and sneaky man I ever met." As it happened, he lasted in Vergennes even a shorter time than he had at Reynolds; in the summer of '73, after persistent reports of heavy-handed treatment of drug offenders, he was booted out of town.

One young woman refused to be seduced by Lawrence. He busted her for selling heroin

"After the Vergennes episode, we never thought anybody would hire him, and we had to laugh when he turned up in St. Albans," says Vermont Defender General Robert West.

Turn up he did. In spite of the obvious warning signs, St. Albans Police Chief George Hebert—pressured by a group of zealous city fathers intent upon wiping out a supposed drug menace—asked Lawrence on board. Lawrence was soon operating in top form, hauling in supposed drug offenders on an almost daily basis. As the Lawrence steamroller gathered momentum, Hebert's force garnered frequent praise in editorials in the town newspaper, the St. Albans *Messenger*, owned by right-wing publisher William Loeb. And despite howls of protest from area defense lawyers about the lack of corroboration for any of Lawrence's busts, the state attorney general at the time, Kimberly Cheney, sent an assistant up from Montpelier to help the county prosecutor ram through the convictions.

Things were going so well that late last spring Lawrence was loaned to the Burlington Police Department as an undercover agent. Then the dike burst. Last July 12, soon after his transfer to the department where he'd begun his law enforcement career, Lawrence was arrested on eight charges of using police money under false pretenses and perjury. The arrest followed an extensive investigation ordered by the Burlington area prosecutor at the time, Patrick Leahy, elected last November at 34 as the first Democratic U.S. senator from Vermont in over 100 years.

Leahy recruited a hired gun from the Brooklyn, N.Y., office of District Attorney Eugene Gold to set up Lawrence. The recruit, Michael F. Schwartz, was placed in Burlington's City Hall Park under constant police surveillance and was pointed out to Lawrence as a big heroin pusher known as "the Rabbi." Lawrence leapt at the bait; he signed and swore to an arrest affidavit for Schwartz for selling heroin to him, though Lawrence never even approached the Brooklyn man.

Leahy had Lawrence arrested.

The St. Albans officials who sponsored Lawrence were immediately seized by a fear and confusion unsurpassed since a band of Confederates rode down from nearby Canada during the Civil War to ransack the town. The northwestern Vermont community's city council slapped a lid on the case by appointing City Attorney Richard Gadbois, the man least in a position to know the details of the policeman's work, as the only town official permitted to issue public statements on the matter. In the coming months Gadbois would frequently play dumb: "I don't know, why don't you ask the police chief about that," he would say, over and over, knowing very well that Chief Hebert wasn't allowed to speak to the press.

Meanwhile, Attorney General Cheney, who'd aided Lawrence in his private witch hunt, was playing his own game of hide-and-seek with the news media. Cheney had let his assistant prosecute Lawrence's cases despite knowledge of a damning report that accused Lawrence of planting drugs, police brutality, making conflicting statements under oath and using expense accounts to wine and dine girlfriends; after Lawrence was exposed, the 39-year-old boyish-looking Cheney labled the security report "full of unsubstantiated facts." "Further remarks," he added, "would be inappropriate until all Lawrence-related litigation is disposed of." That could take years.

But Cheney's hedging took its toll. Last November he was unseated as attorney general by a Democrat, after an election so close the state legislature had to decide it last January.

However, Cheney's involvement in the case did not end there. Evidence soon surfaced that brought the former attorney general's scruples into further question: the revelation that Cheney had hired an unqualified polygraphist to conduct lie detector tests on Lawrence's victims. After a series of tests commissioned by defense attorneys had indicated various arrest victims' complete innocence, Cheney, obviously perturbed at the results, had ordered retests by another polygraphist, Thomas Raymond of the New York Lie Detector Laboratory. The results of the second test were more to Cheney's liking; they negated the results of the first. But copies of the second test showed that Raymond had asked leading questions and introduced extraneous factors into the examinations, two absolute no-no's for polygraphists. Raymond was also not a member of the American Polygraph Association—a standard prerequisite for respectability.

"Had the polygraphist's licensing bill passed the last session of the Vermont Legislature, your man wouldn't have been allowed to practice in the state," wrote Middlebury polygraphist Randolph Brock in a bitter letter to Cheney.

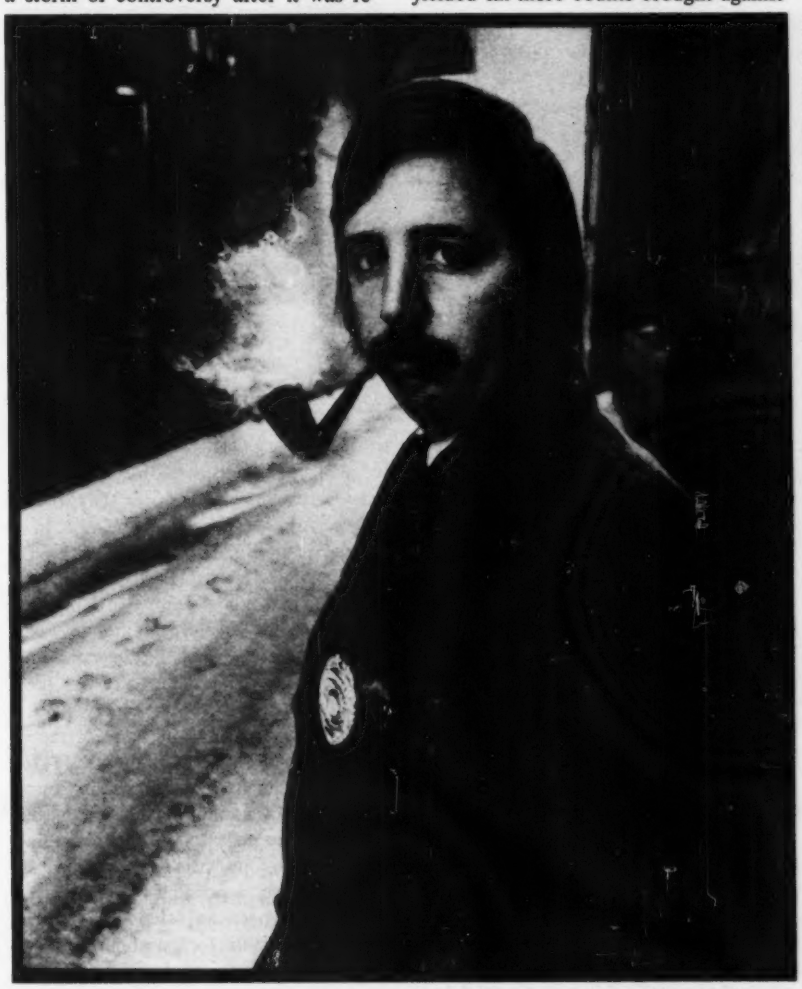
The former attorney general's reaction to the episode: "No comment."

In mid-August Democratic Governor Thomas Salmon acceded to demands that he name a special prosecutor to investigate the whole scope of northwestern Vermont drug enforcement activities. The governor's search for a top private eye took three weeks because, as Salmon's aides explained, since Lawrence had operated in many parts of the state, the governor wanted to make certain that the person he picked had no prior professional contact with the narc.

On Sept. 11, 1974, Salmon held a 9:00 a.m. press conference in St. Albans to announce that his "long and thorough talent search" had come to an end; he named Rutland attorney R. Joseph O'Rourke as his special prosecutor. Twelve hours later O'Rourke resigned in a storm of controversy after it was revealed that a secretary and notary public in his law firm was the narc's estranged wife, Carol, who once helped her former husband prepare his police reports.

Salmon maintained that the matter was simply an accident. Nevertheless, his Republican opponent in the November gubernatorial race, Walter "Peanut" Kennedy, was quick to seize upon the foul-up to throw a few jabs at Salmon. Peanut called the O'Rourke appointment, together with the naming of Chicago Seven member John Froines to the state Occupational Health Director's post earlier in the summer, examples of Salmon's incompetence. The Vermont governor, irked by the episode, pleaded with reporters at a September press conference: "I'm no Dick Tracy," Salmon said. "My job is to appoint people, not investigate their entire background."

Finally, the governor did name a prosecutor who managed to stay, Robert Gensburg of the Northeast Kingdom town of St. Johnsbury, whose six-month-old ongoing investigation has so far yielded six more counts brought against



ARTHUR GRACE/TIME MAGAZINE © 1975 TIME INC

Undercover agent Lawrence: "smooth-talking, personable and sneaky."

Lawrence March 14 in St. Albans. Gensburg is reportedly considering additional charges. He indicates that the possibility of charges against the narc are endless but said he won't go beyond a certain limit. "That would be like beating a dead horse into the ground," he explains.

Lawrence, meanwhile, was making moves of his own. After his original July arrest, he signed up Welch as his attorney, who at the time was running for Congress as a Democrat. Late in his ill-fated campaign, Welch charged that his client was being made a scapegoat by ambitious politicians, although he himself was the only candidate who brought up the issue.

Lawrence's defense counsel also asserted that his client's case was being tried by the press and therefore called for a "moratorium" on the issue, which, needless to say, went unheeded. While Welch was publicly frowning on the publicity given the affair, he and his client privately consented to an interview with CBS newsman Robert McNamara last October. Though Welch was seemingly buoyant over the national news media's interest in him, McNamara was somewhat less impressed with Welch. After watching one pretrial session, the CBS reporter remarked: "If I was ever in any legal trouble, one lawyer I wouldn't want to represent me is Jack Welch."

When the trial itself began in late January, Lawrence's lawyer attacked the one weak link in the prosecution's case—the fact that Lawrence's chief accuser was fellow Burlington police officer Harold Miles, who was himself embroiled in controversy over his fatal shooting at close range last fall of a 25-year-old Puerto Rican man. Shortly after the shooting incident, Leahy, the county prosecutor, who at the time was locked in a close race for the Senate, ruled the Puerto Rican man's death "justifiable homicide." There are those who contend that Leahy whitewashed the facts for political expediency. So Welch constantly pointed out to the jury that the case was a "one-on-one shot—Lawrence versus Miles." But the strategy didn't "cut the mustard," as Welch would say, mostly because Leahy's successor, Francis X. Murray, who tried the case, supplemented Miles' testimony with that of six other police officers.

As the eight-day trial entered its final stage, Lawrence made a number of accusations against his detractors. In the courthouse men's room, he "leaked" a story to a reporter that he was investigating the judge's son for selling drugs, which, he explained, was why Welch's countless objections were being overruled. Lawrence's claim could not be substantiated, and even Welch wouldn't vouch for it, saying that he hoped the reporter would "disregard" it. Prosecutor Murray's response to the allegation: "I'll jump out of the window if that's true."

Another Lawrence charge was issued in a 10-page dossier accusing Murray's office of being rife with drug users. Lawrence said the reason an assistant attorney had resigned shortly before the trial was that he knew the narc had the goods on him. Lawrence went so far as to say that he had a secret file on all the "influential" people in Burlington concerning their drug habits. Again, Welch wouldn't support his client. He said: "Paul did this entirely on his own and I had nothing to do with it."

The narc's predicament took on an even more acute air of desperation when his mother, Cecile, used the occasion of a local Democratic party conference to confront Governor Salmon on the case. The governor, taken aback by the sudden encounter, told Mrs. Lawrence that "it wouldn't be appropriate to comment" and then dashed off, saying he was 30 minutes late for an appointment.

All of Lawrence's victims are potential plaintiffs. If most of them sue, it could be a financial calamity for the state

Cecile had a hard time during the trial since the gallery was full of the narc's former bust victims, who during recesses would openly talk about how they would "like to see the fucker hang." Once, in a downtown Burlington restaurant, a group of them subjected Mrs. Lawrence to their view of her son's exploits—in language peppered with off-color statements.

When the guilty verdict came in, Vermont's longhair community was predictably enthusiastic. James Levy, an attorney in St. Albans for many of those Lawrence had busted, commented, "We are celebrating up here in Franklin County." Welch soon announced his intention to appeal the case to the Vermont Supreme Court. One basis for the appeal is that Lawrence, according to his lawyer, "could have been an atheist" and thus wasn't responsible for anything he said under oath.

As things now stand, the state is bracing for an onslaught of civil suits, since all of Lawrence's victims are potential plaintiffs. If the majority of them sue, Vermont could suffer a real financial calamity; reports have it that if damages are awarded in the suits, as some observers are convinced they will be, the insurance companies representing the St. Albans Police Department and the Vermont State Police will drastically raise their rates to protect themselves from other potential Lawrences. The increased costs will, of course, ultimately be borne by the state's taxpayers.

The disturbing question is how Lawrence managed to get away with it as long as he did. The likely answer, alas, is just as disturbing. "Any person with reasonable intelligence would have realized something was suspicious," notes one St. Albans lawyer. "The officials knew what was going on. But all the prosecutors cared about was improving their conviction rate, and the police brass didn't want to let down communities after drug users."

"The authorities were more concerned with catching people than with protecting individual rights," adds prosecutor Murray. "To them the end justified the means. They had to be aware of what was going on since there were too many red lights along the way."

Though a number of St. Albans defense attorneys continue to scream for the blood of their colleagues who condoned the narc's reign, most of the officials who supported Lawrence have already experienced some retribution. Cheney was defeated in his reelection bid. His assistant who prosecuted Lawrence's St. Albans cases, William Keefe, was demoted under the new attorney general to handling traffic ticket appeals. And Chief Hebert, who brought Lawrence to St. Albans, is currently under investigation for perjury possibly committed during the Burlington trial.

Ironically, it now appears that Lawrence dealt the final blow to a drug enforcement program "run by people who knew next to nothing about drugs" in a state "without a serious drug problem," as one authority put it. The Vermont Public Safety Department hasn't recovered from the bloodletting, and its top officials are resisting attempts to revive the state police drug division with injections of federal dollars. At present, according to its chief, the Burlington Police Department has no operational undercover agents, and smaller police forces in the Green Mountain State aren't jumping into the field either. So, thanks largely to Paul Lawrence, what was once a counterculturist's paradise will probably become one again. ●

PHOTO BY JOHN G. ZIMMERMAN FOR SPORTS ILLUSTRATED.

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And now...Zen and the art of car rental

At Bundy Auto, proprietor Dave Schwartz runs a Rent-A-Used-Car operation that has become the open-air salon of Los Angeles

By Jesse Kornbluth

The lights are going out all over New York now. The diehards of the Manhattan show-biz scene—the actors, writers and directors who always said never to L.A. and meant it—are closing up their apartments, booking seats on the night plane and abandoning themselves to the new media capital of the world. They don't plan to stay, these expatriates; they come to plunder and flee. They resent the way all the work is assigned from Los Angeles offices. They do not welcome the unplanned tilt that has tumbled the nation's creative population to this grotesquerie of a city, where enthusiasm is criminal and anywhere you want to go is 400 dry cleaners and a Pup 'n Taco away from where you are.

What the emigrés hate is not so much Los Angeles itself—the city is so heavily populated by ex-New Yorkers that it's no problem to avoid the natives—but the car culture the city depends upon. The loneliness of the one-man, one-car ethic. The regimentation of the driving patterns. The prevalence of $15,000 cars that are driven without embarrassment in a society where more and more cannot buy Fords. The implied judgment: you are what you drive.

At bottom, the New Yorkers just hate cars.

Dave Schwartz hates cars, too. That's why he rents them.

Which is not the same thing as being in the car rental business—a man who once sold cars under a sign that proclaimed "Bundy *Very* Used Cars" could never become your ordinary dollar-a-day, zillion-a-mile (plus gas) hustler. What he could become was a Zen prankster, a showman of the subliminal; what he could do is rent cars to the creative transients and give them more of a show than they bargained for.

Assuming, of course, that they had eyes to see the invisible comedy that is the real transaction of the "Rent-A-Used Car" operation at Bundy Auto. Because the cars can be real distractions: an old Rambler with red plush carpets and a dim red interior light, battered VWs with goofy faces painted on the back and Mustangs—a slew of Mustangs—with fenders of many colors. And that's just the first level of the weirdness! "Where's the ashtray?" the wife of a Bundy renter wondered as she settled in for the first time. "Honey," her husband told her, "the whole car's the ashtray!" Then there's the mileage distraction. You can look all day on the Bundy lot for a car with fewer than 70,000 miles on it. "Dave should throw a blanket over Bundy Auto and come back in ten years," a friend suggests. "That way, he could have an antique shop instead of this nostalgia car game."

It helps to have a sense of humor to rent a Bundy Car—people are, after all, going to look away from you at red lights—but many appreciate the place for its economic advantages. A cosmetically questionable but mechanically perfect car suddenly looks attractive at Bundy's prices, which are about the lowest in Los Angeles. The service is surprisingly attentive, the cars are amazingly reliable and there's even a parody of a selection. Set near the intersection of the Santa Monica and San Diego freeways even: easy to find. You would think, therefore, that the place is jammed with value-hunters who find the ambience a little tacky, but worth enduring for the thrill of getting around Los Angeles for a few dollars a day.

But that is where the Zen Machine starts working; it's not so simple to rent a car from Dave Schwartz. He does not discriminate against traditional racial or economic minorities, but he does make sure that his cars go to folks who can appreciate them—people who can vibrate in harmony with his old V-8s. The interview is brief at Bundy Auto—David does not like to talk much—and, like the larger transactions, almost invisible. But invariably, within the first 30 seconds of your encounter with Dave, he has judged your vocal tone, read your eyes, checked out your aura and made a preliminary assessment of your karma.

"To bow or not to bow," that is the question. Dave sees this as the central question, in fact, that confronts all businessmen; how they handle the bow-out determines their success in everything, he contends. "It's all a matter of timing,"

Jesse Kornbluth's last piece for NEW TIMES *was on the new depression.*

ILLUSTRATION BY FRANK RILEY

Dave says. "Knowing when to reject a guy, or when to take a bow-out yourself . . . what else is there?" When he's not sure about would-be renters who come to the lot, Dave will first ask for credit cards. If they pass that test but Dave wants to find a way to reject them, he'll ask if they have insurance on their own car. If they're still contenders but Dave is now sure he doesn't want them, he'll ask for a California license—or, if he thinks they can handle it, he'll tell them the harsh truth.

Rejecting a potential troublemaker is sometimes more fun than making money. Like the guy who called Bundy, eager to rent a convertible for two days. There were several on the lot. "I know he's not going to stiff me financially," Dave says, "but I feel he's going to leave the car in Hollywood and say he ran out of gas. So I bow him out, tell him we don't have any convertibles. Two days later, he wants any car. But I don't want him. I bow him out again, refer him to another agency. He calls back a third time, I still bow him out. Today he calls:

Dave Schwartz believes that the uglier a car looks, the better it should run

'Did I rent a car from you? I've got one from someplace and I don't know where to take it back.' Guess some other guy didn't see he's a bummer."

So if you're serious about renting a car from Dave, it helps to be in show business or related media; that's how some 60 percent of Dave's clientele qualifies. It helps to be from New York, where irony is still considered a legitimate form of comedy. It helps to know someone who has had good dealings with Dave. And it doesn't hurt to be enlightened; seeing material objects as tools in your larger transformation, with a sensitivity to the notion that if your car doesn't want to take you somewhere, then maybe you really shouldn't go.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID ALEXANDER

Car karma: It's not what your car says about you, but what you say to each other.

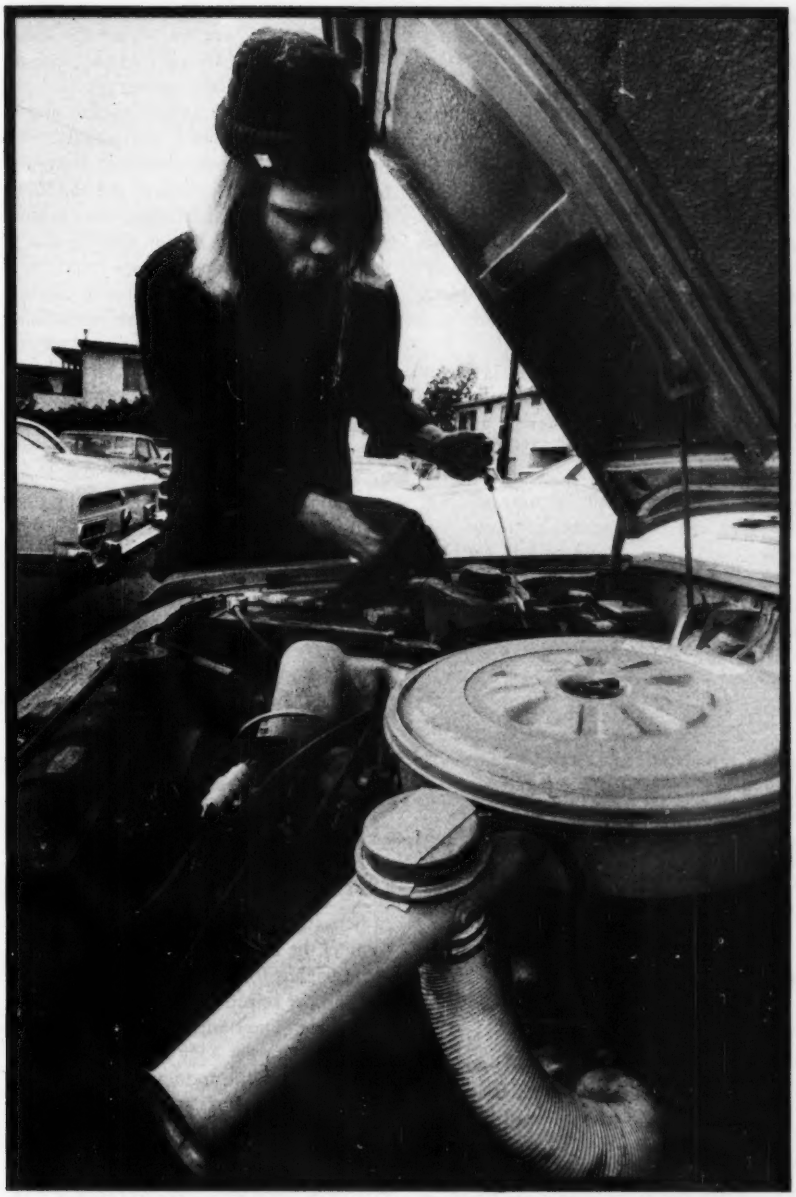
Car karma, then. It's not what your car says about you, but what you say to each other. It's about the life cycle of cars, and whether, for very little money, you've earned the privilege of sharing the road with a vehicle wise enough to have already seen more miles than you've seen days.

The man who invented this game did not, naturally, come upon so oblique an enterprise with the single-minded profit-motivated directness of his competitors. "I was in college," Dave remembers. "Someone was trading a car in, and instead he sold it to me. I took the car to a dealer. Made $200. So I started buying friends' cars. Gave them the same price as the dealers. Then I'd stick an ad in the paper and sell them."

Suddenly he had enough cars to fill a lot and he found himself in business. But not any lot would do. David gravitated toward a losing operation at Pico and Centinela, just off the Santa Monica Freeway. It was bankrupt. "The guy also owned a bowling alley in Thousand Oaks," Dave chortles. "And he was a real typical car man. You couldn't trust him at all. And another bowling alley opened in Thousand Oaks—this was 15 years ago, when the place couldn't support two—and he couldn't meet the competition and suddenly he found himself owing his mother-in-law and the third trustee on the property. He wanted $4,000 down. It was a steal."

It was also a joke. People used to walk by and laugh: "How do you have the nerve to sell these wrecks?" Dave told them the truth: "These are just crappy old cars." But one day a girl came in and bought a heap from him and it broke down the same day. It was the single worst moment in Dave's career. He believes that the uglier a car looks, the better it should run, and he'd told the girl that the car was rich in staying power. So when his disgruntled customer explained that she only wanted the damn car for three months and could she rent one for the $225 purchase price, Dave felt so bad about her misfortune that he rented her a car on the spot. "At the end of three months, I had the car and I had the money. So I said to myself, 'Gee . . . wait a minute,' " Dave remembers.

That was four years ago. He started renting then, competing with a mogul who stocked his lot with 38 vintage clunkers. "That guy said he was going crazy with 38, that he didn't know what he was doing first. For me, the big plateau was 11. I remember the 11th car I rented. It broke down. So I went back down to 5. Then I said, 'God, if I can just get up to



A Bundy Family member, assistant Kenny has been around for five years.

15.' Then I shot up to 20 and back to 10. Then I was in the 30s. Each plateau was incredible. 'If I could just break 50,' I thought, 'I'd retire, that would be it.' I went from 40 to 59 just like that. Now there are over 100 on the road."

To handle that load, he had to develop a technique. He came to it early on, when he was still working with a half-assed insurance setup. "I was renting cars by the month only," Dave explains. "And I put the car under the customer's name and then switched it back to mine at the end. There was enormous paperwork." There was also the problem of expansion. He needed a bigger lot to store the wrecked and trashed cars he bought for parts. He put on a coat and tie, remembered to shave and comb his hair so he would look less like a Jewish Steve McQueen—his mother's assessment of his usual flavor—and went to a bank for a loan. He didn't get it. He decided, "Screw it, I'm just gonna be me." He went back in Levis, a T-shirt and torn sneakers with no socks and got his loan.

This taught him that the reduction of tension does not produce the clichéd lessening of activity, the "we-moved-out-to-the-country-so-we're-kinda-poor-now-but-we're-happy" fantasy of the television soap operas. No, although Dave goes around saying, "I'd rather have less business and less grief," the zinger was simply that by cooling out and playing his funny little games, he started doing more and more business. And the better he got at it, the less he had to say, until, on the phones and during the pre-rental interview, he narrowed his role to 20 words. "The less you say, the better off you are," Dave believes. "There's only so much you can say in a day, so much energy you can expend. If you throw it away on negative things, you're going to go crazy."

To make sure he didn't, Dave hired some unconventional assistants, Kenny and Ron. They go away periodically but always come back, and they have been around for five years now. This fall, when Ken was on vacation, Dave hired Kathy as his temporary replacement, but she just wouldn't leave; she's become part of the Bundy Family. Mert, the hardened mechanic who's been with Dave for a dozen years, wouldn't agree—but then he doesn't think any of them works hard enough.

Dave laughs at all of this. All he cares about is that when the cars come back, they look happy and have been adequately paid for their services. This is why he prefers show-biz folk; they understand the importance of getting paid with special poignancy. "I've never been stiffed by a show-biz person, ever," Dave insists. But it is hard to play money games with him no matter who you are. "I don't come on real strong," Dave says. "If someone's late, I call and say, 'Do you want to pay or don't you?' I can't boggle my mind with that other stuff." Not surprisingly, the only woman who ever complained about his old Nixon poster ("Would you buy a used car from this man?") refused to pay for her car. Dave turned her case over to one of his aliases, who dunned the woman with equal lack of success. Dave finally took her to court.

The collection phone calls are treasured for their infrequency; it's the daily morality play that is the bread-and-butter theater at Bundy. Once a couple came to the lot, eager to rent the pride of the fleet, a Lincoln Continental. They had no local address and no credit cards. Only the fact that they were evangelists—and therefore in show biz—was in their favor. Dave invited them into his office to talk it over. As it happened, Oliver, Dave's cat and the true boss of the lot, was sleeping in the interrogation chair. And Dave was reluctant to wake the cat. "That's the greatest thing I ever saw," the evangelist said. "You really love that cat." Dave let them rent the Continental: "I trusted them then. Before that, I never would have."

Obviously, Dave's conception of religion is not particularly theological. Asked about his devotional practices, he will talk about his running: four to six

miles a day. He used to be more dedicated, but two years ago he entered San Francisco's Bay to Breakers Race, a 7.8 mile crusher. Dave brought his wife along, It was to be the first public manifestation of his powers. Three thousand others had the same idea. Dave finished 1,500th—and cracked.

Now Dave's religious exercises are mostly about transcending the material plane. First to go were his cars. He had a brand-new Mercedes and was merely embarrassed by it, but the Aston-Martin he'd bought from producer Bert Schneider was putting him through enormous changes. "I kept it in the garage for two years," Dave recalls. "Couldn't handle it. And I'd always been so jealous of this friend who had a Ferrari until I had the Aston. That cured me. You know, it's like the ego in us." He still owns the huge Cadillac limo—he got it for almost nothing—and justifies it by taking the car only to those places where he'd otherwise have to contend with crowds. And he always plays the chauffeur's role, driving his elegantly dressed wife and their friends around in his jeans and a driver's cap. Once he drove it to his son's school but Bradley ran away from him, and now Dave tends to stick to his shamelessly battered '65 Porsche during the day.

For a man who used to be so ambivalent about his car lot that it was painful for him to spend a full day there, Dave is, his friends say, remarkably at peace with his world. He owns the building that houses a porno store, and although it is a 10-second stroll from the Bundy lot, he has yet to set foot inside; it no longer bothers him that it exists, though. And he has extended his no-grief approach to include his various real-estate holdings and his own house in Bel Air. "These days I hear him saying that you get what you give," an old friend says.

What David really gives is an opportunity for people to come together in a setting where competitiveness and ego games are, quite simply, ridiculous. For the show-biz folk who meet one another there, the Bundy lot has become an open-air salon and its proprietor is nothing less than the Gertrude Stein of Los Angeles. "I met 90 percent of the people I know in Los Angeles through Dave," an actress says. "He makes it delightful to go to the lot," adds another. It's a very democratic place. Some of Hollywood's more secure actors and actresses rent from Bundy, as do the snooty when their Mercedes are being repaired. Dave plays no favorites and has been known to make a major "name" wait while he registers some carpenters on vacation from dome-building in New Mexico. And ever since the German and French TV crews heard about Bundy, the lot has been trilingual.

Naturally enough, a few are suspicious. Once, when Dave was friendly with Jim Aubrey's secretary during Aubrey's MGM days, some producer got the idea that Dave was trying to take over the studio without leaving his lot. Or else Dave had to be the kingpin of a huge dope ring. He hired a young screenwriter to chronicle this fabulous undercover operation. The kid couldn't take it: got hooked on heroin and had to be hospitalized.

Others—some Bundy renters with less than cosmic senses of humor—have also found the Bundy experience to be an occasional strain. On Christmas Eve, when the lot was closed, a local writer discovered that his new VW was running out of gas—and that he had no key for the gas cap. He took "the greatest pleasure" in smashing it open with a wrench. Jeffrey Kramer, a New York actor not prone to hyperbole, remembers the time he stopped at a traffic light and the girl in the next car blew him a kiss and motioned for him to introduce himself. But when he tried to roll down his window, the handle came off. "I still have that rent-a-wreck," he says uncomprehendingly. Dave has en-

The best worst cars in the world

We're in the office dirtying our sunglasses so we can brave the spectacle outside. Dave gives me a final run-through before we go Out There. "No matter who comes in, they look at the lot and laugh," Dave explains. "The crap sort of overtakes the nice cars. Then they discover how well they run. But we know we can't please everyone with these, so we always say, 'This is strictly basic transportation; if you're unhappy, we'll take you to any rent-a-car place you like.' " But for around $50 a week with a few hundred free miles thrown in, people tend to adopt Dave's value system.

Time for the tour of the lot. Dave reminds me not to say anything negative in the hearing range of the cars. Outside, he'll only generalize about his favorites, '68-'69 Rambler Americans: "They're so ugly, everyone resents getting them." It's not until we stagger back inside that Dave can be candid about his cars, their case histories and personal problems . . . and his favorites. In order of preference, they are:

The 1958 Chevy Biscayne. "85,000 miles and it runs like new. Everything's original. I don't like it to go off the lot. I save it for people who can really appreciate it. Mostly I rent it to the movies; it was the star of *The Roy Campanella Story.*"

The 1966 Mustang Convertible. "Almost my all-time favorite. I bought it for very little, but when it got totaled, I couldn't let it go. I had to fix it. Now it runs perfectly. But don't wash it; it doesn't run as well when it's too clean."

The 1962 Dodge Dart V-8. "Somebody gave me this one. Had brand-new radial tires, just needed a thermostat. No dents, but it's very ugly. In the four years I've had it, it's needed one brake job. And once we had to replace the front seat covers. It's always out. I've taken in $8,500 on this one."

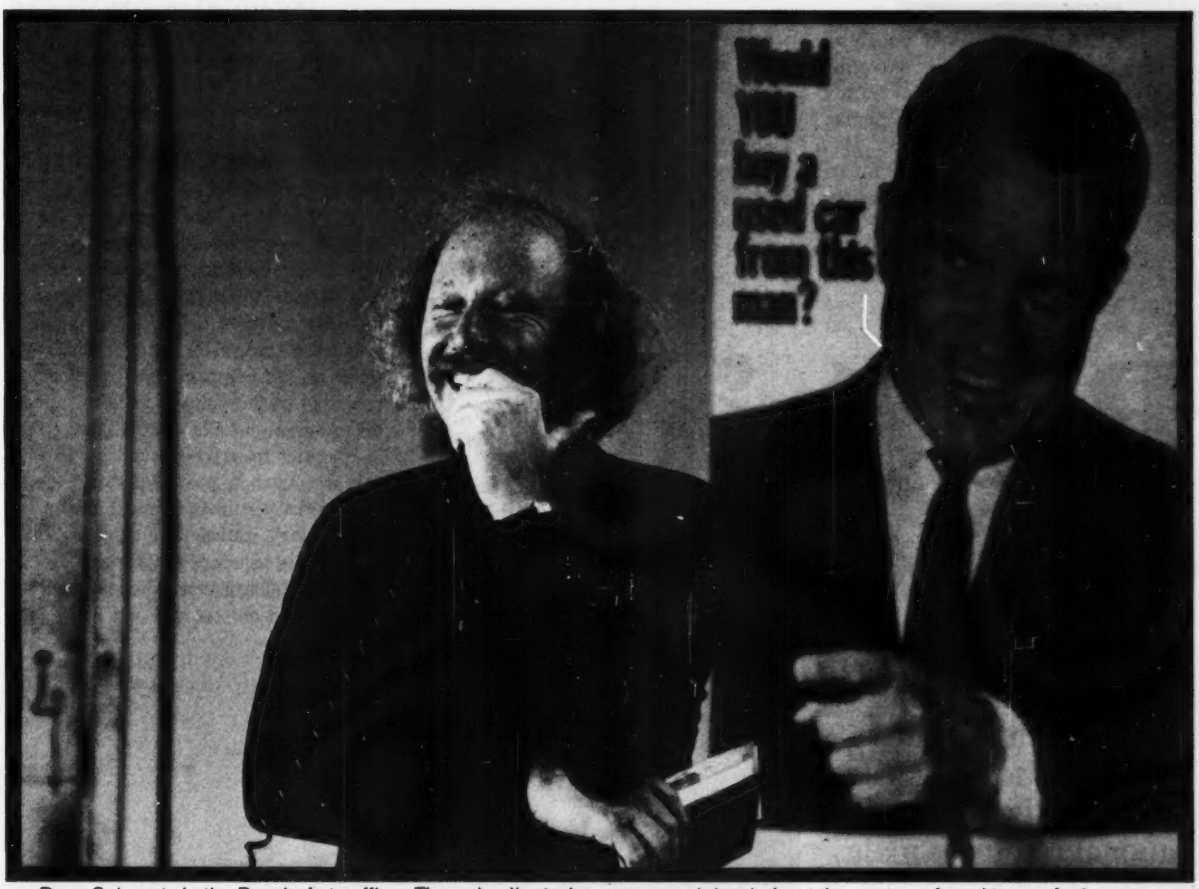
The 1962 Ford Falcon. "Bought it from a sorority girl. The first guy I rented it to had a Gucci briefcase. He didn't want it. I made him try it for one day. He loved it. Everybody does."

The 1961 Cadillac Convertible. "I put my life into this car; my friend, the San Francisco baroness, wanted one. Fixed it up, everything was new. Got a friend of hers to drive it up. He was supposed to meet the baroness and the baron and some friends for a big event in Salinas. But the car seized up on the way, blew the motor. The baroness had to rent a new Caddy to get back to San Francisco. I sent her the money back, towed the car down to L.A. and overhauled it. Now it gets 10 miles a gallon."

The 1965 Ford LTD. "A great buy for $10. Now there are dents everywhere—almost as many as the '64 Malibu, which is so battered the driver's door only opens from the inside. So when some guys wanted a car to pull a trailer around, I gave them the LTD. Next thing I get a call; they're in San Francisco, the water pump broke and the Mercury dealer wants $107 to fix it. Now I can replace the pump here for $12. Or take a bow-out on the car. But we've never lost a car and I've got this ego thing. So I fly up to San Francisco, pay the $107 and drive it back. Runs great now. But people get a vibe from it and I have to talk it up."

The 1969 VW Sunroof. "This is a private joke. It's my wife's car. I've taken in $7,500 on it."

PHOTOGRAPH BY HELENE GAILLET



Dave Schwartz in the Bundy Auto office: The only client who ever complained about the poster refused to pay for her car.

couraged him to sue for "breach of fantasy."

Kramer's other complaint—one he shares with several other renters—is the age of his car. "It's so old," he marvels, "that the radio still gets Tokyo Rose." Others complain of headlights better suited for spotting low-flying planes and steering wheels so hard to turn that parallel parking becomes impossible. David listens to these complaints as if he is compiling a psychological profile on the driver for future use. He makes sure that the cars are completely checked out before they go on the road and is quick with replacements if they break down, but, as he says, "I'm not mechanically inclined. I don't know how to work on them. All I can do is diagnose. It's just a feel. Same thing that tells me what car to give what guy."

And Dave does not make mistakes. He tends to start you off with what is affectionately known as a Bundy Bomber, something like a '62 VW with a radio that works in every other gear and no upholstery anywhere. It is more outrage than car, but, exasperatingly, it runs perfectly and only backfires a little. If you say nothing, you go on renting this car, defining your own level. But if you complain, you become eligible for a promotion.

This is where it gets tricky. Dave is a Mustang freak; he has so many of them, in fact, that when Warren Beatty was filming *Shampoo* and needed vintage Mustangs from the late 1960s, he came to Bundy. But each Mustang has its own personality—and its own level. Some will prefer the green convertible with AM-FM radio and a top that has to be helped. Others will swoon for the newly painted blue Mustang convertible, the one with the tinny radio speaker. Then there's the yellow hardtop with a fine radio but with a front bumper that can get loose and rub against the tire on turns. And there's a new lipstick pink convertible—"new" meaning recently acquired by Bundy—which is still an unknown quantity awaiting an adventuresome spirit.

When Warren Beatty was filming *Shampoo* and needed Mustangs from the late 1960s, he came to Bundy

Dave is there to help you through that karmic maze, curious in his way to see just how far you can go before you settle into one car and recognize it as the mechanical equivalent of your own vibration. That and deciding who is going to be allowed to rent make up days that never stop being interesting for Dave. Because, in a business that others have computerized beyond all horizons of humanity, Dave is the point man, the necessary person on the Bundy lot. "Ron knows who to bow out but now how," Dave explains. "Ken knows how but not who." Playing with the phone, with the watchful eyes of Lenny Bruce in the front office keeping him ever more honest, Dave has one other primary function: rejecting the partnership offers that keep coming his way. Jokers who have turned him down in the past for loans, people who want to franchise his operation, hustlers who want to become his employees in some new San Diego or San Francisco office—the calls don't stop. And through all this, Dave, of course, is completely unfazed. "I just remind myself," he says, "look what we've done with our business. And look what they've done with their lives." ●

Banking on women

When the roles are switched and wives support their husbands, both resort to subterfuge to protect that vulnerable national resource: male pride

By Joan Frazier

Twenty years ago Jules had a top job in the music business. Today, if you ask Jules what he does for a living, he'll tell you: "I make love."

Jules is no gigolo. He's a married man who happens to depend on his wife for most of his keep. Are there many men like Jules? It's not easy to find out.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, whose consciousness has yet to be raised, assumes that wherever husband and wife are living together, the man is the chief provider. Jules, for instance, is nominally proprietor of a business—a small record company that produces no records but through which Jules funnels his total income, $2,000 to $3,000 a year in royalties from records made when his career was at its peak. Jules' wife earns more than 10 times as much. Even so, government statisticians consider Jules the primary source of provender.

The latest census reveals that 47 million men are married and living with

their wives. Of that number, 7 million men are retired, totally disabled, or unemployed and for one reason or another—possibly discouragement—not seeking employment. About 20 million wives work, and different polling organizations have determined that about 19 million of them work because they need the money—not for any glorious notions of personal fulfillment.

How many of those 19 million wives earn substantially more than their husbands or support them in toto? No one knows.

Doing my own loose sort of polling, I discovered that everyone I asked is acquainted firsthand with at least two or three families in which the wife earns most of the money. Even if my cross section was skewed by locale (New York City and suburbs), that could easily work out to 5 million families nationwide.

So Jules is no isolated case. The only thing unusual about Jules is that he isn't ashamed of his dependency. Like most jazz musicians, he doesn't spend a lot of time worrying about status and the Protestant work ethic. His friends, in fact, envy him. To them, Jules has it made.

But most financially dependent husbands—and the wives they depend on—hide the male's dependency, even if it's only temporary, as if it were a sin on a par with incest. "You're not going to use our names, are you?" I heard right along. No, I'm not. Most of the names here are fictitious, though the situations are real. I recognize that camouflage is both kind and necessary.

The stigma attached to dependent husbands is not limited to the ranks of ordinary folks. The famed and the wealthy also find it necessary to dissemble. Gary Morton, for example, was a second-string stand-up comic when he married Lucille Ball in the early '60s. She was so embarrassed by the gaucheries of his act that she quickly yanked him off the stage and awarded him with the title of executive producer with her Desilu Productions. Although, in time, Morton became involved in the job in fact as well as in name, during those first few years his chief responsibility was to warm up the studio audience in anticipation of Lucy's antics.

High-income women are married with suspicious frequency to men who call themselves public relations or business managers. There are, of course, bona fide managers married to well-heeled wives, but the job titles have become disguises for dependent husbands. Former *77 Sunset Strip* co-star Roger Smith's acting career was apparently plummeting when he married Ann-Margret, whose star was rising just as quickly. Now he is her full-time manager. Often as not, when she is invited to appear on talk shows, he comes along for the ride. And when the conversation turns to her happy present—she just opened to strong reviews in *Tommy*—and her shiny future, it is he who waxes eloquent, while she looks respectfully on. "The pity of it," notes one show business observer, "is that he has talent too. If the breaks had gone differently, he could be out promoting himself."

Sometimes the husband and wife invest heavily in stage props to support the disguise. Everyone in the ad business knows someone like our former neighbor, Martin M., whose wife is a well-paid executive secretary. When Martin lost his job at one of the big agencies and couldn't get situated elsewhere, he decided to set himself up as a creative marketing consultant. He rented a small office in a Fifth Avenue building, had stationery and business cards printed, and arranged for a telephone-answering service. In his mind he was legitimately starting a new business, and he and Ellen were truly excited about it. Yet in the two years his "business" existed, he failed to sign up a single account or earn a dollar in income.

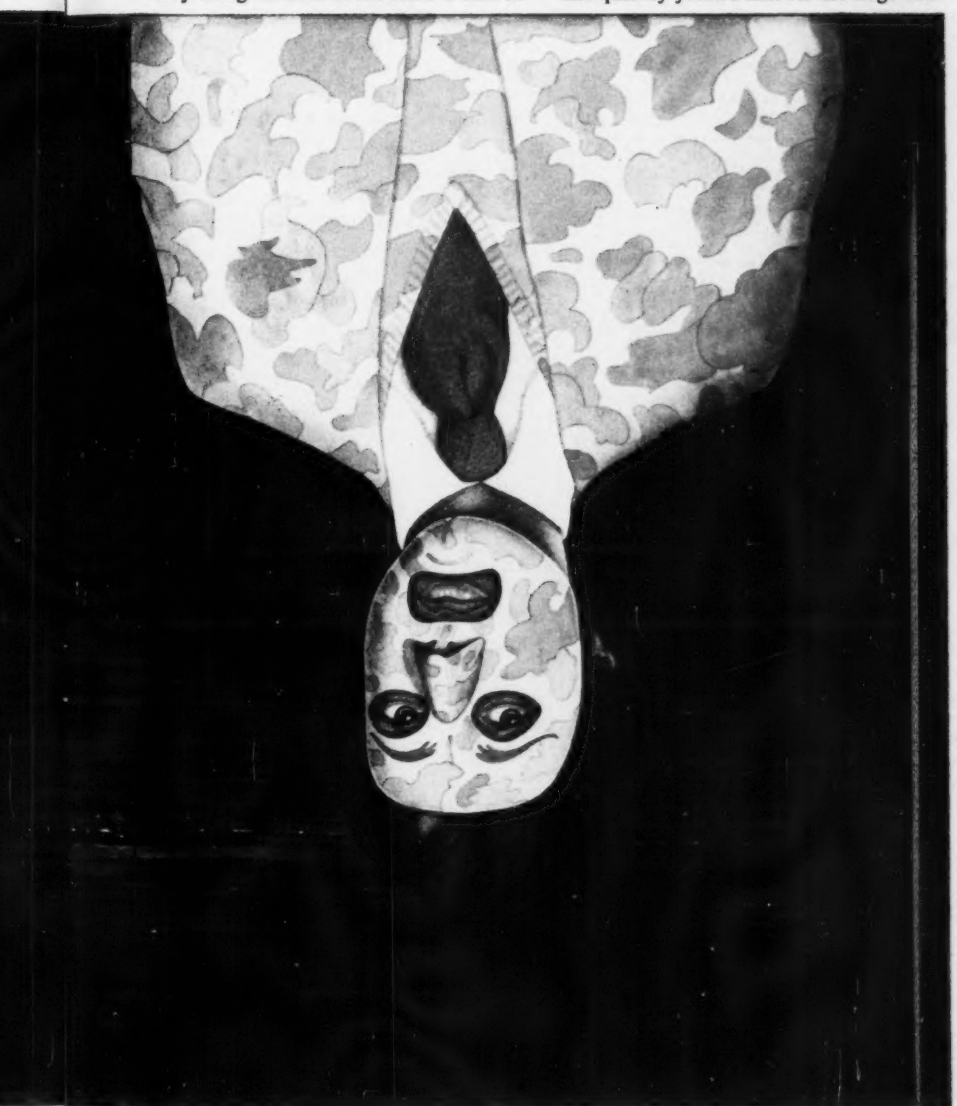
I often run into Ellen in the supermarket on Saturday mornings. One Saturday, because at the time I was going through something similar, I asked Ellen what finally made them decide to give up on Martin's attempt at self-employment.

"We didn't decide," she said. "We just ran out of money."

I knew they had had to sell their house and were now living in an apartment with their two teenage children.

"Is Martin doing anything now?" I asked.

"He's found somebody else." She concentrated her on the shelves of canned goods. "We're getting divorced."



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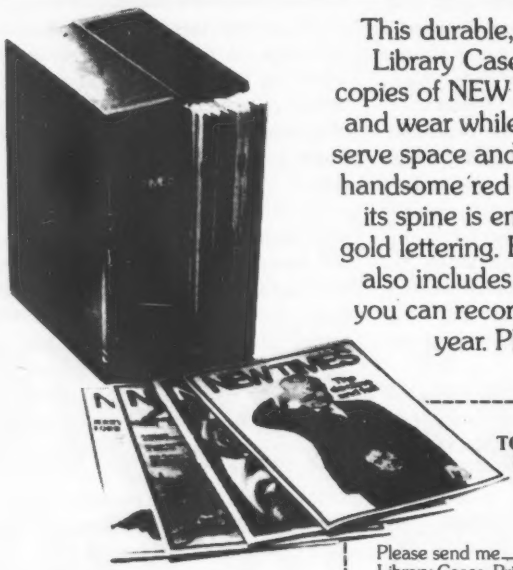

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Despite her emotionless tone, Ellen's bitterness was tangible. Women have grown up expecting their husbands to be at least self-supporting, if not the sole provider. When that expectation is betrayed, the entire marital relationship almost inevitably suffers. A wife may resent carrying the added responsibility and express that resentment by withholding the money she now controls from the mate she feels has burdened her so unjustly. He, in turn, may retaliate by seeking understanding and affection elsewhere.

Being dependent is especially hard to bear for the middle-class, middle-aged professional. After all, if you could make it through medical school or law school, you're assumed to be earning a sizable income. What if you aren't? What if your income is less than your wife's? It usually becomes very important for you to conceal the truth.

Even though a husband's dependency may be caused by forces over which he has no control—poor health, economic recession—the weight of social disapproval is so heavy that it is virtually impossible for him to maintain his self-esteem. What happened to Stewart B., a lawyer, follows a familiar pattern.

Stewart held a top political office in upstate New York for more than a dozen years. He and Marge went to lots of parties and he began to drink more and more. When he was unexpectedly voted out of office, his world was shattered and his heavy drinking turned into alcoholism. He became unable to attend to even the few law clients he still had.

Luckily, while Stew was an officeholder, Marge had bought a part interest in a gift shop, more as a hobby than anything else. With Stew out of the running both as politician and provider, Marge turned all the energy she had formerly devoted to furthering his career to making a financial go of the gift shop. Today, their children grown, Marge goes to the shop every day. Stew stays home, walks their Yorkshire terrier once in the morning and once in the early evening, watches TV and drinks himself into a stupor by bedtime. It's been years since they've had sex.

Most of their friends know the tragic turn Stew's life has taken. When strangers inquire, Marge downplays her contribution. "Stew's health hasn't been good and he's had to cut way back on his law practice," she says, as if he were daily besieged by clients. As for herself: "Me? I run a little shop in town. It's so boring to

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Joan Frazier is a pseudonym for a woman who supports her husband.

stay home." She tells anyone who will listen how much they still love each other.

Alcoholism seems to be a disability frequently associated with male dependency, but whether it is cause or effect is unclear. When I asked a Family Service social worker in Westchester County about cases of dependent husbands, she told me: "If you have fifteen cases you have fifteen different reasons." But then she added, in seeming contradiction: "Of course the great majority are psychopaths taking advantage of some good-natured woman."

Dr. Robert Counts, Manhattan psychiatrist and family therapist, does not believe a man must be emotionally disturbed to depend financially on his wife. In 30 years of practice, not a single man has come to him for treatment because of problems connected with being dependent on his spouse. On the other hand, many women have become his patients because of poor adjustment to the role of dependent wife.

The explanation is not difficult. Even if being dependent disturbs a man profoundly and threatens to ruin his relationship not only with his family but with the world at large, he is unlikely to seek therapy since it would only confirm the fact of his dependence and bring his manhood further into question. This correlates with Phyllis Chesler's observation in *Women and Madness* that women are much more likely to seek treatment than men because it is part of the woman's traditional role to rely on figures in authority for help and self-definition. Not so the man.

Dr. Counts thinks that in younger couples there is less insistence that the husband be the chief or only provider. "I know an artist whose wife has a small income of her own. They both lived on this income—a kind of hippie, spartan existence—and were quite happy." The young husband had no difficulties in accepting his financial dependency until, Dr. Counts says, "the wife had a baby. At this point the husband behaved in a rather self-defeating way and caused a lot of unhappiness all around, besides filling himself full of guilt. When we looked into it,we found that what was bothering him were the vestiges of his middle-class upbringing, which suddenly surfaced when he became a father." Dr. Counts wonders whether the continuing social pressure for the male to climb the career ladder will eventually affect those young couples who so far have managed to liberate themselves from the work-success drive that he's seen ruin so many marriages.

The sad truth is that basic attitudes haven't changed for most people, even though in many younger marriages today both husband and wife work. The white male pays a high psychological price for his many privileges, since the exaggerated need for success can lead to an exaggerated sense of failure.

Eight years ago my husband lost his job as director of sales promotion when his company changed hands. Although he was in his late 40s, his associates assured him that he'd have no trouble landing another job since he had a record of solid achievement and fine references. Yet a year of job-seeking brought only one result—a sure knowledge that the term "overqualified" was a code word for "too old."

I had not worked since the first year we were married, but our finances were in desperate shape. Tom had no objections to my getting a job—we really had no other choice. I found an entry-level spot that paid about a quarter of Tom's salary.

Tom, meanwhile, began his second year of seeking employment. And subtly, he lost hope. More and more often, after

When the husband becomes dependent, the wife is held responsible for the damage to his ego

the children and I had gone, he went back to bed. I would come home from work to find him still in robe and slippers. He complained of severe shoulder pain, from an old football injury.

The doctor took X-rays and found nothing wrong. He asked to speak with me privately and told me that Tom was suffering from depression. I remember shouting at him, "Of course Tom's depressed. He'd be crazy if he wasn't!" In those days I was still capable of getting angry. The doctor thought psychotherapy would help, and we found a therapist who was willing to wait for payment until after Tom found a job.

That therapist was never paid. My career bloomed alongside the ashes of Tom's. On occasion he gets a low-paying sales job. Since he is a good salesman, his spirits improve remarkably. During these periods we are both happy. He is again performing as the man of the family should. But at the slightest disappointment—a dip in the sales curve, an ambiguous remark from a co-worker—his pain returns and he takes to bed. I threaten, "If you don't get up, I'm leaving—for good." Sometimes the threat works, sometimes it doesn't. I am heartsick and bitter—bitter at having to be the family's breadwinner, a role that brings me more hostility and ridicule than praise, bitter at having to dole out dollars not only to the children but to a grown, able-bodied man now in his 50s, bitter at our lack of social life because Tom seldom feels up to seeing people. It does no good to tell myself that Tom is sick and that, given the circumstances, I should be grateful our family is still together and fairly well off. Somehow I feel cheated.

Like Tom, many dependent husbands are the victims of age discrimination or career obsolescence.

Jules, for instance, made it big when he was in his early 20s, and supported a wife and children for many years. But when his career began to go sour, his wife divorced him to marry an older man with money. Jules, faced with the fact that at 42 there was no longer any place for him in the music business, found that the prospect of being loved and supported by Ann was not the worst thing in the world. As marriages go, theirs is relatively happy. "A lot better," Jules says, "than my first. In bed, too."

If Jules' attitude became more common, much misery might be avoided. But even Jules' wife is affected by the almost universal view of dependent husbands as sponges and parasites. To counteract this, she tends to exaggerate Jules' present participation in the music scene and to see herself as a kind of patron-of-the-arts. And at times, undeniably, she is irritated by Jules' lack of financial independence, complaining that he has squandered his limited funds on foolish extravagances while leaving her to pay for all the necessities.

The great majority of dependent husbands have little in common with the comic-strip stereotype of the lazy slob in T-shirt, slouched in front of the TV, beer can in hand, who wouldn't wield a broom or boil an egg if his life depended on it. The women's movement has seen to that. One of the side benefits of feminism has been that men are more willing to take a hand in cooking, cleaning and child care. Such activities are much less virility-threatening than they were even five years ago.

Another recent development, also a by-product of the feminist movement, has been career competition between husband and wife—something movie stars have experienced for decades, with results we all know. With a different view of the male role—and the work/success syndrome—Barbra Streisand might still be married to Elliott Gould. After all, when they wed in 1963, Gould was the star—in *I*

Can Get It for You Wholesale—and Streisand was the bit player. Perhaps if his ego had been less threatened when her career shot into the stratosphere, they might never have had to split.

Some people seem to believe that a woman makes it big only by climbing up the backs of recumbent men. They point to Mary Wells of Wells, Rich, Greene advertising agency, probably the top-paid woman executive in the world. She's now married to Harding Lawrence, head of Braniff International Airlines, who isn't starving either. But for 16 years she was married to Burt Wells, who was also in advertising and today runs a small agency in Connecticut. The fact that her career went farther and faster than his ought to say nothing about Burt Wells' standing as a human being, but unfortunately, too many people think it does.

Often, when the husband becomes dependent, the wife is blamed. She is held responsible for the damage to his ego caused by his decline in status. In cocktail party chatter, she's a "castrating bitch," one of male chauvinism's more punitive concepts.

I asked Dr. Counts if he thought there was any truth to that picture. "I haven't seen it in economic terms," Counts said. And he doubts that psychological dependence correlates with financial dependence. In one couple he knows, the wife is a psychiatrist and the husband is a writer. The husband admits to earning less than his wife, but Counts saw no signs that this troubled their marriage. "He told me he spent more time in the park babysitting than any of the nursemaids." Counts said. "He was genuinely proud of it."

Conceivably, writers, artists and musicians are special cases. The odds on the gamble may be long, but many a wife has supported her husband for years in the hope that one day his achievement will make him—and, by extension, her—famous. There is no aphrodisiac like fame, or even the promise of it.

Bob Smith, husband of literary agent Claire Smith, quit his job in advertising some years back to concentrate on writing. He recouped handsomely for his years of dependence when Simon & Schuster published his lighthearted novel, *Sadie Shapiro's Knitting Book*. Each such success makes other nurturers of talent take heart.

In any case, creative artists of either sex need sturdy egos to persevere. Being financially dependent seldom does damage to their self-images.

The dependent husband who suffers the most is not a creative artist or counterculturist but someone who believes in the system and has a traditional regard for the man's responsibilities. When such a man reaches 45 and finds himself unemployed and unemployable, his whole life comes under attack. Most younger men reading this will shrug and figure that nothing like that will happen to them. Yet the Labor Department reports that a stretch of joblessness is experienced by half the men in the work force at some time during every five-year period.

Of course, the 32-year-old ad agency creative director and the 28-year-old rock record promoter, each pulling in over 50 grand a year, don't want to think about that day, maybe a decade hence, when they'll be as obsolete as the engineers after the space program was slashed. If something forces them to think about it, they run a little faster on the treadmill.

What has to change is society's attitude toward the male role. But to date, even in the vanguard—women's consciousness-raising groups—the notion that the husband must be the main breadwinner is firmly fixed. In the CR sessions I attended for two years, I was pitied by all—and no doubt pitied myself—because I remained married to a man who was no longer able to support the family. No matter what her personal success in a career, a woman who even partially supports her husband is held to be somehow less fortunate than the woman whose husband is a lavish provider, no matter what his other failings.

I've frequently heard divorcees who receive alimony and child-support express contempt for the woman who stays with a man who doesn't support her. Their attitude reveals the chains on their own thinking since, economically speaking, they are still slaves willing to be sold to the highest bidder. To them, the wife with a dependent husband has been found wanting on the auction block.

In two popular feminist novels, Doris Lessing's *Summer Before the Dark* and Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying*, the heroines are married to successful professional men. In fact, the husbands are doctors—one a neurologist, the other a psychoanalyst—which reminded one jaundiced reader of the Jewish mother's definition of paradise: "My daughter married a doctor!" There are unsuccessful *ex*-husbands but no unemployed acting husbands in feminist novels. In seeking equal pay and economic independence for women, NOW and other feminist organizations repeatedly point to the fact that most women are "only one man away from welfare." But the feminists are not willing to take the next step—to allow men true economic independence, or dependence, if that is their need.

There are good historical and social reasons for this. Throughout the Western world laws require the male to support his offspring, and no laws have proved harder to enforce. The poorest families, as we all know, are those headed by women. Women, on the average, earn less than 60 percent of what men earn. Certainly the main effort must go, for the present, toward bringing women's pay and job opportunities more nearly in line with men's.

But even in the current state of economic inequality, thousands if not millions of families would be helped if our attitudes toward the male role could be transformed. Unemployed fathers, instead of being regarded with suspicion by social workers and hounded by the welfare bureaucracy, might stick around and help bring up their kids if their self-esteem weren't destroyed by doing so. Disabled men—such as my grammar-school principal's husband, a carpenter who fell from a ladder and was crippled for life—might be able to live longer, fuller, less apologetic lives. Divorce among high achievers might become less inevitable.

Graduate students today are making the longest strides toward this goal. Whereas 10 years ago it was always the husband who was helped through law school or medical school, and always the wife who did the helping, the current pattern is for them to take turns and help each other. It makes economic sense, both in the short and the long run.

Norman Mintz, associate dean of Columbia University's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, says that, in awarding fellowships based on need, "We assume that an employed spouse contributes to the support of the spouse in school." He doesn't specify male or female.

He was eager to tell me about his "very, very able administrative assistant." She had been supporting her husband, who had just graduated from Columbia Law School. Now it was her turn. Since her husband was taking a job with the government in Washington, she was leaving Columbia to enter Georgetown Law School.

Their pattern may be the pattern of the future, not only for the purposes of education but throughout married life. More and more couples are devising ways to relieve the man of a lifetime of financial responsibility and the woman of a lifetime of household drudgery. Trade-off and sharing allow for richer, more varied marriages and greater personal fulfillment. On the day when it is no more demeaning for a man to be dependent on a woman than for a woman to be dependent on a man, sexual equality will have taken a large step toward realization. ●

Week of April 12 **Billy Joel**		Week of April 19 **Bob Dylan**		Week of April 26 **Labelle**		Week of May 3 **Jefferson Starship**		Week of May 10 **Bonnie Bramlett**	
Albany/Schenectady/Bay City	WQBK-FM	Greenfield, Mo.		KRFG-FM	Oxford, Ohio			WOXR-FM	
Albuquerque	KRST-FM	Greenville/New Burn/ Washington, S.C.	WAUG-FM		Peoria			WUTO-FM	
Augusta	WAUG-FM	Hartford/New Haven		WRQR-FM	Philadelphia			WIOQ-FM	
Austin, Tex.	KRMH-FM	Houston		WHCN-FM	Pittsburgh			WYDD-FM	
Bay City/Flint/Saginaw	WWCK-FM	Huntington/Charleston		KLOL-FM	Portland, Ore.			KVAN-AM	
Beaufort, S.C.	WBEU-FM	Indianapolis		WAMX-FM	Portland/Poland Springs/Bath			WJTO-FM	
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Waiting for a change

New York, N.Y.—Frankie just met Ray and Emanuel for the first time. He arrived the night before at the Men's Shelter on Manhattan's longtime street for losers, the historic Bowery. Frankie plans to leave tomorrow, but over the several months Emanuel and Ray have lived on and off at the Shelter, they've learned "it is easier to talk about leaving than to find the exit."

The trio have a lot in common. They're black, in their 20s and represent the Bowery's new breed—prisoners of the depressed economy. With unemployment climbing, more men are invading the Shelter than at any time since the Great Depression, and many of them are under 30.

It's raining outside. So the Shelter's stench-filled, urine-stained halls are crowded with most of the 2,000 men who are currently seeking its handouts—"three hots and a cot." Their bellies full of beef stew and rice pudding, the older men overflow two TV rooms. Most are bundled up in several layers of bedraggled clothing; some nod off in a sleepy daze, while others pick lice off themselves or their neighbors. No one pays attention to the evening newscaster talking about inflation and recession. These men know only depression.

Frank Wexler, assistant director of institutional services for New York's Human Resources Administration, which runs the Shelter, explains that the youthful influx began because "these younger men are semiliterate, unskilled. They are the fringe kind of worker. When the economy slows down, this tends to wipe out the part-time worker."

No exit for the Bowery's new breed.

The whole character of the Bowery is changing with the arrival of the younger set. Dr. Robert Reich, director of psychiatry for the Department of Social Services, says, "Older men are very accepting of what is given them; they cope in a kind of masochistic way. These younger men do not readily fit into the Bowery cycle. They are likely to be more impatient, militant and vocal."

Talking together across the Shelter's pool table, Frankie, age 26, Ray, 25, and Emanuel, 24, prove Wexler and Reich correct. Last fall, Frankie tells the others, he went AWOL and spent "the following months sleeping around in vacant apartments and working at odd jobs." Then, the part-time work dried up and Frankie found his way to the Bowery. "I never even passed by this neighborhood before yesterday," he says.

Now, Frankie is complaining about some of the "help" he got. He spent the previous night in one of the area's dozen flophouses where each floor slept about 100 men, their cots spaced about 30 inches apart. He continues: "I had to sleep with one eye open because of the whorehouse-like atmosphere.There was rampant homosexuality—voluntary and involuntary."

Ray breaks in to say that he once saw a man "bust another man's head with a real hatchet—like the old Indian days—on the staircase inside the Palace" (another flophouse). Ray didn't interfere; "you're just going to get hurt if you get involved" is his philosophy.

After Labor Day, Ray was temporarily laid off his oil-rig welding job in New Orleans. To find employment in the interim, he decided on New York. "I thought I would have a better chance of survival here," Ray explains. But things haven't gone well. Ray spent two months searching "almost everywhere" for work before coming to the Bowery.

"It's hell down here," Ray says. "I used to read about it but never believed it. Like somebody dying right in front of you on the lunch line and everyone step-

PHOTOGRAPH BY WARING ABBOTT

ping over him, without ever looking down. I've seen a man knifed in that cafeteria for not moving fast enough. He just stood there with his guts in his hand." From time to time Ray takes acid "to get over the rough spots."

Instead of acid, Emanuel took to drink to pass the days, and says, "I went down, way down. I got depressed and started drinking heavily. I fell out twice and ended up in Bellevue. I think I have been able to work myself out of it. I am taking antibuse pills. Now I need something to replace the bottle."

Emanuel's arrival on Skid Row follows years of what he calls "bad luck." After spending 32 months "upstate," he managed, early last year, to get into a New York Telephone training program, only to be laid off when the order for cutbacks came. Next, Emanuel worked in factories, loading trucks and hauling freight; then, the economy slowed down even more and the jobs were gone.

Emanuel finds the Bowery "more disgusting than anything I have ever seen, even in a penitentiary. It is all right for the older guys," he maintains, "but I'm young. I want to get back out there."

—By Eileen Shields

A case of concrete principles

Sacramento, Calif.—"You know, it was Jerry's mommy and daddy who first had the idea to build this place," Charles Pinkerton, construction foreman, chuckles, "and now that Jerry's governor, he's living in a dinky little apartment downtown. With used furniture! He's even driving his old Plymouth when everybody else got themselves Cadillacs right off." His mirth disappears as he shakes his head in bewilderment.

Several weeks ago, Pinkerton wasn't prone to chuckling over ironies concerning California's chief executive. He was angry and bitter. Brown was supporting a bill in the legislature to shut down construction of the rising governor's mansion, vociferating against it as a symbol of the ruptured priorities of Nixonesque fat cats (Reagan) and branding it a "white elephant."

The gubernatorial home had been a hot issue during the campaign, and once elected, Brown was incapable of installing his ascetic image within the regal mansion atop the mesa along the American River. The new young governor was lobbying to abandon the $1.3 million project.

This move outraged Pinkerton. The house that he wants completed, done right, fulfilled in its gracious promise of craftsmanship and elegance, was being demeaned by Brown's refusal to accept it as his official residence. Pinkerton is responsible for choreographing the entire operation, from bulldozing the first chunks of earth to installing the last light switch. He took the rejection personally.

Usually soft-spoken and called "Pinkie" by his crew, the slight, wiry foreman fought back. On the telephone for hours, he ordered all the remaining components for the mansion. Pushing and prodding, he contracted for the 15-foot redwood doors; the 26,000-square-foot tiled roof; the mammoth twin fireplaces; the tons of seasoned lumber; the quarter-inch thick, tinted thermopane windows; the $20,000 solar water heating system; the reinforced steel for earthquake-proofing; the four independent all-electric heating systems—in short, everything.

"I've got stuff ordered from all over the country for this house," Pinkerton said. "But I've got to get ordering more concrete, 'cause the more concrete I get laid, the harder it'll be to shut us down.

"It'll cost him more money to shut us down than to let us finish it," he grinned. "All the subcontractors can sue, and they have a right to the profit they could've made while they sue. Prices go up about 5 percent every week. Two months ago, concrete was $15 a yard and now it's $27 a yard."

As the mansion's fate moved before the legislature, television crews flocked to the site with renewed interest. Most were visibly astounded, according to Pinkerton, by the progress in their six-week absence from the scene. To media representatives Pinkerton spoke of the "foolishness of stopping now. . . the incredible waste. . . especially as far as we've got here." He allowed as how "there'll probably be a lot of unhappy taxpayers."

Even though Brown won't live in it?

"We're not building this place for Jerry Brown, we're building it for the GOVERNORS of CALIFORNIA," Pinkerton said vehemently. "And I reckon there just might be a few more after him."

When legislators and the public saw the "white elephant" alive and kicking on the evening news, the "bill to kill" was quickly forgotten. Gov. Brown, the chief state architect and Stevenson Pacific Inc. (Pinkerton's boss) met for some hasty negotiations. The outcome is that the mansion will be finished, sans the swimming pool, sauna, wine cellar, gardens and tennis courts. Its official function, during Brown's administration, will be to house "seminars" and out-of-town functionaries.

While Pinkerton complains about "being cut to the bare minimum," he is obviously pleased with this victory. "Flournoy and Brown used this house as a political football," the 49-year-old foreman said, "and I don't think they ever thought it would get this far." But Charles Pinkerton, a one-man lobby, managed to score the victory that will stand for 200 years.

—By Cheryl McCall

ILLUSTRATION BY BILL NELSON

The Divine Recline of Miss M

By Henry Post

For the past year and a half, the singer with the hottest career possibilities in show biz has been laying low. Has Bette Midler had her shot at super stardom and blown it?

Bette who?

Midler, of course. You remember the Divine Miss M—the campy singer who exploded on the national scene in '73. That outrageous Jewish redhead from Hawaii who made the covers of *Newsweek, Ms.* and *The National Observer* in one fell swoop. The one-time musical comedy chorine whose singles "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" and "In the Mood" became top-40 hits across the country and whose first two albums, *The Divine Miss M* and *Bette Midler,* each went gold. The Bette Midler whose national concert tour two years ago grossed over $3 million (just $½ million less than the historic Dylan-Band tour) and whose three-week engagement at Broadway's Palace Theatre set a box-office record for an advance sale ($160,000 in a single day). The Bette Midler to whom all the beautiful people—from Greta Garbo to Katharine Hepburn to Paul McCartney to Nina Simone to Mick Jagger—paid court in her dressing room backstage.

You remember the Divine Miss M—or do you? Maybe not as well as you used to, for, during the past year and a half, the woman who had the hottest career possibilities in show business has been laying low. In Divine Recline, she has hidden herself away from film, television and recording offers—as well as from the sure international fame that was once hers for the asking. In an industry whose memories are short, Bette's star is no longer one of the brightest in the firmament: *Rolling Stone* gave her their 1974 award for "Missing in Action."

"A vacation is one thing," says one of Bette's former agents, who wishes to remain anonymous, "but complete oblivion for a year and a half is another. She

had this business kissing her feet; we were getting offers for her from everybody. Every director, every network—they were falling over each other. Now a lot of people in the business think her whole thing has cooled, that she had her star shot and blew it. Anyone can understand easing up for a while, but she lost her momentum. Ask yourself, 'Why hasn't she recorded? Why aren't we seeing her in films and on television?' Is that stardom? Where has she been?"

"She *had* to stop," explains one of Bette's three gag writers, Bill Hennessey, a former hairdresser-turned-manager who

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was Bette's friend and companion in her early days as a New York cult performer in the Continental Baths, the homosexual bathhouse that rose to fame along with Miss M. "She's been working for five years without stopping and she was emotionally exhausted. She needed a break."

Or as Bette herself put it at a press gathering to announce her comeback production, *Bette Midler's Clams on the Half Shell Revue,* which is scheduled to open at Broadway's Minskoff Theatre on April 14th: "Where have I been? In bed."

"It was the best year of my life," she now says of her disappearance, but not everyone feels that Miss M was entirely happy in exile, or that the exile was completely self-imposed. "Why, she was getting so bored," says the former agent, "that all you had to do was call and offer her a free drink and she'd go anywhere."

Danny Fields, rock gossip for *16* magazine and *The Soho Weekly News,* was surprised this summer when he got a call from Bette after he ran a small item on her.

"Danny," she said, as he recalls it, "come on. Why don't you print something hot about me for a change."

"Like what, dear?" asked Fields.

"Oh, anything," she answered after a long pause. "Just use your imagination."

"I wonder what happened to her career," said Fields later on, "if all she's doing is calling up gossip columnists?"

"She may call it a vacation, but I call it a big mistake to have turned down so much of what came through our office," says her former agent. "But she wasn't listening to reason. No one could get to her because of her manager, Aaron Russo. That overprotective megalomaniac is just a money-hungry bastard without any class. Managers like him ruin careers. She should never have gotten involved with him."

Bette ran into Aaron Russo in Chicago four years ago, at a time when they each had their share of career frustrations.

"Bette was tired of going nowhere," says Hennessey. "She'd been through a couple of managers. There was no money and it all seemed very bleak. Her act was together then, but she was still unrecognized." Budd Freedman, an ex-Midler manager and owner of the Improvisation, a show-biz club where comics and singers try out material, remembers that "she used to walk up toward that stage and they'd look at her and start laughing. Even though her singing would eventually win the crowd over, it was all very painful." "She used to always open with 'Am I Blue,' says Baby Jane Dexter, another singer who worked the same clubs. "It was all very down. It wasn't until Bette got to the Baths that they forced her to really entertain. That's when the Divine Miss M was born."

At the time Bette met Russo, he was operating a failing rock club, the Kinetic Playground; when the club was finally destroyed by fire, Russo was in debt and came on very strong to Bette. By then she had nearly completed recording her first album, *The Divine Miss M;* Ahmet Ertegun, president of Atlantic Records, had signed her after catching her act at a few small clubs, and he and David Geffen, the whiz-kid record executive, became two among many who advised the singer against signing with Russo. But Bette, feeling stymied, became romantically involved with Russo and felt she could trust him completely with her career. She signed.

"Aaron was just lucky, very lucky," says Bette's former agent. "After that first album hit and the press fell in love with her, it was just a question of booking tours. Russo was sitting on a gold mine. Suddenly he was wearing three-piece suits, sporting jeweled stick pins and carrying walking sticks as he dropped his gold bricks off at the bank."

Russo's aggressive business drive and ability to work out good deals for Bette helped make her rise possible while it further enhanced his already unsavory reputation as a crass and ruthless hustler. He claims that between record sales and concert sales, Bette has grossed nearly $20 million.

Russo didn't like the idea of having agents horn in on the action, working up deals for Bette and "developing" her talent. He reduced the role of Bette's agency, Creative Management Associates, as much as possible and recently let her contract with them expire—ensuring that Bette would be completely dependent on him. "Agents haven't helped us before," Russo says, "so who needs them now?"

"Aaron's right in a way," said an agent at William Morris. "Before, all Bette needed was someone to book her tours. Now she needs to develop in film and television, areas Aaron knows nothing about. So he saves 10 percent—at the expense of her career!"

"Agents are all the same," says Russo. "All they want is money!" Russo's notorious tightfistedness frequently causes problems with some of those

Henry Post, a New York free lance, has written for Penthouse, Interview *and* The Soho Weekly News.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANN PHILLIPS

Midler with manager Aaron Russo: "We'll go it alone."

working around Bette. He pays her backup singers the union minimum, one of her writers only $200 a week, and tries to get away with paying everyone as little as possible. "And the reason everyone puts up with it is because we all love working with Bette," says Sharon Redd, one of the Harlettes, Bette's backup singing group. "And no one wants to bother her with money talk and cause trouble. I'm much happier working for her than I was with Helen Reddy, who treats her singers like shit."

"We'll just go it alone," says Russo. "And of course there will be those who say I've made a few mistakes with Bette."

Turning down a role in Mike Nichols' film *The Fortune* was one of those mistakes. Russo and Midler met with Nichols over a year ago to discuss the role, a batty heiress who gets caught up with Jack Nicholson and Warren Beatty. Bette, delayed by a long massage, arrived an hour late for the meeting. Nichols asked Russo to leave him and Bette alone while they talked, and when Russo returned, he was alienated and angry. "It was a very emotional meeting," says Hennessey, who met with Bette and Aaron afterwards. "The only one who was happy was Stockard Channing, who got Bette's role." The deal fell through, Russo now says, "because anyone could have played that part. Bette's first role should be in a film with a role only she can play."

"Well, I'll have to see it," Bette told Andy Warhol shortly after *The Fortune* mishap. "There's a very good possibility that I made a mistake. But that's the ball game. . . ." "Aaron blew it," says another agent. "It was the perfect deal. With that team, it would have walked Bette right to the top in films in as sure a situation as anyone could offer."

"We're considering a number of offers in film now," says Russo, "but nothing is sure yet." Bette says she'll do a movie "when I get a tasteful script with tasteful lines and tasteful scenes for a person as tasteful as myself."

"While Aaron sits around blowing deals in film and television, Bette is being ripped off artistically," points out a William Morris agent. "Helen Reddy lifted 'Delta Dawn.' Cher took 'Am I Blue.' Joni Mitchell did 'Twisted.' The Andrews Sisters owe their whole comeback to Bette. She should be a much bigger star. Her new show should be timed to come out with a record. The film and television deals should be signed and scheduled. Aaron thinks she's already a legend. Well, in Tulsa they only know her from the recent appearance she made on the Cher show. And even then she should have had a solo spot."

Bette's one guest shot on television was done for her friend Cher. When they first talked about the show, it was going to be just the two of them. But George Schlatter, Cher's producer, decided that Cher's special, being her return to television, had to be a sure thing and so decided to play it safe and pack the show with names. Elton John was added. Then Flip Wilson. When Bette and Aaron arrived to tape the show, they thought that they would get a solo spot and special billing. But Aaron had nothing on paper and, though Bette's solo spot was taped, it wasn't aired. (The same thing happened to Raquel Welch, whose solo spot was also cut—only she slapped a $100,000 suit on Schlatter.) After showing off her dress at the recent Grammy Awards, Bette joked. "It's Cher's. She wouldn't give me a solo spot, but I got the dress."

As it was, many of Bette's ad-libs and a few complete comedy skits that she taped with the rest of the cast were cut because they were too dirty for television. The entire show was pushed back an hour from 9:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Eastern time because of Bette's very sexual presence. The whole experience gave Bette a feeling of *déjà vu*: Her concert act, filled with tit shaking and four-letter words, had been considered too hot for TV by the networks back in '73 when they were offering her deals for specials, and, at the time, Bette hadn't been interested in going through the television puree machinery.

After the trouble with the Cher show, Russo said, "Who ever became a star from television anyway? Just Lucy!" Not to mention Mary Tyler Moore, Cher, Ann-Margret, Barbra Streisand and Johnny Carson.

Besides keeping Bette protected from agents, Aaron keeps her away from the press as well. Bette, too, dislikes the press. "It doesn't make my job any easier," says Candy Leigh, her press agent. Bette assumes that every interviewer wants to hang around with her and become best friends. Her experience with *After Dark*, the middle-class homosexual magazine that first championed Miss M, is a perfect example.

"That bitch," said an *After Dark* executive in the aftermath of the magazine's Ruby Awards ceremony. "I've

never seen a girl get her head turned around by fame so quickly. Doesn't she remember that it was us at *After Dark* that *made* her career? And the language that girl used at the Ruby Awards!" The *After Dark*er's blood vessels were bulging an unsightly red as he anxiously kicked his buffed Gucci's against his desk.

As the year's previous winner of the *After Dark* entertainment award, the Ruby, Bette had been asked to present the '74 award to Lucille Ball. When Bette arrived, she found no side door and had to make her way through a restaurant filled with coifed fans, each sure he was Bette's best friend. As she was pushed and shoved around the room, she muttered to an executive, "You goddamn motherfucker. You sold me down the river."

Miss M found safety in the kitchen until one of the *After Dark*ers tried to drag her out for photos. She wouldn't go. He slapped her. Slapped her again.

Hearing that Bette was in tears in the kitchen, Lucy came to the rescue and the two stars retired in the back of Lucy's limo and drowned the entire experience in whiskey. To this day, Lucy's autographed photo sits in Bette's art deco candy box of an apartment, a modest three rooms in New York's Greenwich Village filled with thick, red-velvet furniture that props up visitors like bonbons in a jungle of plants, gold records and framed reviews.

One of the reviews that isn't framed is Jon Landau's from *Rolling Stone*, who, like most of the critical community, felt her second album, *Bette Midler*, was a disappointment.

"Why do these critics want every album to be brilliant?" Bette once asked. "Why can't you have an album with 12 good songs all just well sung? It's as if everyone has to cater to *Rolling Stone* and the Jon Landaus." "I hear my review broke her heart," says Landau. The recording did well financially and the single "In The Mood" got into the top 10. But the sting of bad words from the same critics who so highly praised her first album appears to have made Bette more cautious.

Since then, she has experimented with a number of different record producers, falling far behind Atlantic's hopes for an album a year. "Right now," Bette says, "I'm just picking brains." Her former musical director, Barry Manilow, still helps her out but remains busy with his own career. His hit singles "Mandy" and "It's a Miracle" have turned him into a star during Bette's year off.

Paul Simon and Bette went into the studios this past summer and recorded together. Those tapes are reportedly tied up in corporate-managerial knots and remain unheard. Another producer, Hal Davis of Motown, who produces the Jackson Five, was called in and, in an historic deal for a white female vocalist, agreed to produce four singles. One of them, "Do It Now," is a hot disco-sound track in the tradition of Motown's more recent hits, such as the Jackson Five's "Dancing"—not much substance but a lot of rhythm. But this single, too, remains unreleased, awaiting remixing and new vocals.

Atlantic has been waiting for a product to push and hopes that Bette's upcoming show will result in a live album. But at this point, the show, which began previewing in Philadelphia on March 31, remains untested. And until everyone involved is pleased with the production, a live album is only talk. "We don't expect anything for another six months," said a source at Atlantic, "and that's if we're lucky."

"While Aaron sits around blowing deals in film and television," points out a William Morris agent, "Bette is being ripped off artistically"

Bette Midler, who had show business at her feet, now has everyone waiting. She claims to be unperturbed. "It used to really upset me, all those things I'd hear about myself," Bette says. "I had to get over that. Now let them say what they please. Let them chew that fat all they want." But, just the same, a lot hangs on the fate of *Clams on the Half Shell*. Unlike her concert tour, which was in the rock-tour tradition, *Clams* is lavish and very Broadway. And with $300,000 already spent in pre-production costs, it's one of the most expensive ditties to hit Broadway for a four-week limited engagement (although there is an option for a six-week extension). If successful, the show may tour a few other major cities, such as Los Angeles and Chicago.

Much of the success of the show will depend on its director, Joe Layton. Known to lean toward overproduction, he is experienced in dealing with the big stars. He won awards for his Streisand television specials. He is a corporate man, smooth, bright, personable and slick. In the right company he can be very successful. But his Japanese stage version of *Gone With The Wind* was a critical embarrassment, and so was his recent ballet, *A Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Clams will feature lavish sets by Tony Walton—a *Showboat* set, a gigantic turntable, a barroom scene, a *King Kong* production number . . . and some of the ambience of a lush Zizi Jeanmarie Casino de Paris revue. There will be a cast of 35 (including black soul singers and tap dancers) and an in-concert section in which Bette and Lionel Hampton will perform together. Bette will also perform "The Bitch Is Back," a medley of some of the more ridiculous songs writers have offered her for recording, and which she has turned down. "Oh, how shall I describe the show?" she says. "It is wild, warm, witty, clever and brilliant. It also reaches a new level of taste—taste free."

Russo is taking no chances with the New York opening night. Unlike the opening at the Palace, which was filled with media types and business heavies, Russo has set aside only a small number of tickets for the press. The media and business crowd gave Bette a cold welcome at the Palace, and Aaron hopes that by packing the crowd with fans, her New York return will be warmer.

Of course, the many people who can't get tickets for opening night are mad. *After Dark*'s advertising director, Louis Miele, reportedly said, "I swear, just like we made her career, we can break her career."

But there are those who wish her every success. Said Jasper Jones, an editor of Popular Library's adoring unauthorized biography of Bette Midler, "We're all pulling for her. Of course, the sales of the book depend on her success, a book we rushed through production and then had to sit on for months waiting for her career to take off again."

And then there are the fans, who still send letters and gifts to their Divine Miss M. In the cold Sunday night rains of late February, they started lining up at the *Clams on the Half Shell* box office. By 3:00 in the morning, the line was around the block at 44th and Broadway. At 10:00 a.m., when the box office opened, there were over 800 Midler devotees under umbrellas clamoring for tickets. By the end of the day, Bette's show had broken her own record for advance sales—$200,000 in a single day.

"How could anyone miss this? It's an Event," said one fan on line, "It's not every day that last year's Grammy Award winner for 'New Artist of the Year' has a comeback." ●

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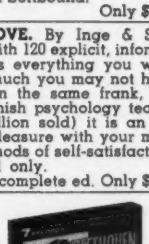

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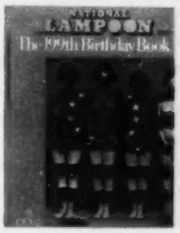

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MOVIES

Helter-skelter

By Frank Rich

After years of futzing around with all those Big Topics that are so near and dear to Western Civilization, Ken Russell has finally, with **Tommy**, attempted to settle for less—and less, in this excessive director's case, can't help but be more. The reason that I say Russell is making do with less is that this time around he has hit upon a film property that doesn't demand that he address us with the stupefyingly silly dissertations on the meanings of sex or art that such previous stimuli as D. H. Lawrence (*Women in Love*) and Tchaikovsky (*The Music Lovers*) have inspired him to deliver. The gorgeous collection of 30-odd rock-and-roll songs (mostly by Pete Townshend) that comprise the libretto of *Tommy* help this British director out because they often check his penchant for intellectual diarrhea—even as they play to his talent for cooking up lurid visual extravaganzas. Certainly Russell has tried to pump as much pretentious crap into The Who's work as he can (and every time he does so, he hurts the movie grievously), but he can't rewrite the score, and frequently the simplicity and the eclecticism of the lyrics overcome his most grotesque metaphorical strategies. There are patches of *Tommy* that are as drenched in Symbolism (in the freshman-composition-course sense of the word) as anything in *The Devils* or *Women in Love*, but, unlike those films, this one also provides its fierce, if not ecstatic, pleasures. Sooner or later occasions arise in this movie when Russell has no choice but to go with the music's flow—when he must keep the beat and illustrate *Tommy*'s spacy imagery as zappily as his hyped-up, '60s-mod interior decorator's sensibility will allow—and in those instances (which account for about half of the picture's 110-minute running time) *Tommy* can be a real kick in the head.

Tommy is the best thing ever to happen to Ken Russell, and if Russell is not quite the best thing ever to happen to *Tommy*, maybe it's wise to take what we can get. The director misses out on the big possibilities in Townshend's opus primarily because he can't understand any aesthetic subtext that doesn't match up with the hysterical Freudianisms with which he has been previously preoccupied. *Tommy*'s thrust, to the extent that it has one, is too delicate for Russell: it has to do with an inner peace, "a new vibration," that can be attained in the midst of a cruel world of spiritual and sensual chaos. Townshend's hero, a boy rendered deaf, dumb and blind as a consequence of the traumatizing murder of his father, learns that a sickness-induced isolation will take his mind "where minds can't usually go"; he finds salvation through pinballs because that game teaches him how, with effort, one can seize power over the seemingly irreconcilable elements of one's personal universe. Russell hasn't caught the plaintive drift of *Tommy* (most affectingly realized in the music by the hero's repeated refrain "See me/Feel me/Touch me/Heal me")—and even the "Pinball Wizard" number (sung raspingly and effectively by Elton John), though one of the movie's best slices of showmanship, fails to communicate the special high of a pinball rush. Russell has instead gone after the thrills and chills that are explicit in the libretto's text, and, since many of the songs can be legitimately exploited for such immediately gratifying effects, the results are often entertaining, even when they're not what you might call enlightening. The impact is almost entirely at a gut level; this *Tommy* is an *Exorcist* without tears, which is to say that it's a head-crusher, all right, but one that spares us talky plot scenes (even talk itself), superstitious mumbo-jumbo and Linda Blair.

At its best, *Tommy* is so big and loud that it could probably get through to someone as critically handicapped as its title character. Russell provides the slam-bang visuals that television has taught us to expect from any human experience, even one that has so little apparent need for pictorial fleshing-out as rock music. Of course, one could simulate the same sensations by staying at home and listening to *Tommy* through a drug-induced fog, but to go to a movie theater and have all the work done by someone else is a most appealing notion. (Viewers who are most sophisticated at dumping chemicals into their metabolisms may find *Tommy* a less substantial turn-on than others will, but since most audiences are going to choose to view the film in some state other than sobriety anyway, the issue is probably more technical than real.) To achieve his goal of frying as many loose nerve ends as possible, Russell has pulled out every trick lens available to an insecure director who must use technology as a crutch, and he hasn't hesitated to reprise some of the elegiac shtick that has served him in the past (dewy flowers, sparkling waterfalls, white-on-white interiors, swirling lovers' embraces). Those built-in limitations aside, the best sequences in the film are those that aspire to be kinetic versions of the kind of gory, phantasmagoric pop art that has graced the record jackets of any rock albums worth their salt since the advent of *Sgt. Pepper*. Some of these bits—a V-E day celebration as Tommy is born or the calisthenics of vacationers at a "Holiday Camp"—present the kitschiest undercurrents of middle-class life in the glaring, tacky, postcard tones of today's super-realism; they have an appeal commensurate to the Nik Cohn visions of '50s America that turn up in the currently voguish picture book *Rock Dreams*. Although *Tommy* as a whole is curiously devoid of eroticism (except for a brief, amusing reunion between *Carnal Knowledge* bedmates Ann-Margret and Jack Nicholson), the film's other standout bits revolve around a sterile but viscerally engaging kinkiness—a kinkiness that turns up, unsurprisingly enough, in numbers featuring Tommy's brutal cousin Kevin (Paul Nicholas), his pederastic uncle Ernie (Who drummer Keith Moon, a maniacally appealing cross between Ringo Starr and Dudley Moore), and the redoubtable Acid Queen (Tina Turner, looking like a slatternly transvestite). Each of these eccentric personages fails to break through the block afflicting the angelic hero (Roger Daltrey, natch), but they fail with ghoulish methods that may send less deadened mortals than Tommy out of the theater in search of aspirin or, quite possibly, paragoric. The Acid Queen, God love

her, attempts to cure the lad of his curse by locking him in a metal carapace that rather ingeniously injects him with the contents of several dozen syringes simultaneously. Like everything else during Turner's turn, the liquid that enters the hero's bloodstream is a convincing blood-red, and throughout the film, scenes are color-coded for heightened impact: we get sequences bathed in puke-green, feverish yellow and just about every other hyper-hue imaginable, with the possible exception of shocking pink.

Would that these high spots were not separated by those numbers that give Russell the openings, however narrow, to drag out his pet platitudes. The director avails himself of every opportunity to remind us of the calligraphic resemblance between the first letter of Tommy's name and the cross on which Christ died (not so much for our sins, I'm beginning to believe, as to provide every bankrupt artistic imagination with an all-purpose symbol); there are also several presumably satirical attacks on that old sacred cow, materialism, and when this director tries to be funny about the crassness of capitalism, forget it. In one extraordinarily ponderous number ("Eyesight to the Blind"), Russell takes us to a church where worshipers pray to a plaster statue of Marilyn Monroe—a hoary idea for a gag that is just one more variation on a conceit Andy Warhol thought up only about 15 years ago. When Russell tries out some lame parodies of TV commercials (none of which challenges our fond memories of *Putney Swope*), he then has the television set literally barf up the products that have been advertised on it; that heavy-handed kicker is redeemed only by the considerable wit of the film's most ingratiating performer, Ann-Margret (as Tommy's mother), who makes the slimy and hilarious most of her duty to writhe around in the ensuing flood-waves of champagne, baked beans and chocolate. Russell's latent, starry-eyed predilection for social criticism is even more damaging at climax-time, when, as he reads it, Tommy's "miracle cure" becomes the basis for a new spiritual fascism (the pinball machine as cash register) that must be vanquished if the hero and by implication all of us are to find true freedom. Such foolishness is no more worthy of serious consideration than is the filmmaker's continuing fascination with facial scars, lame appendages and other physiological mutilations—an obsession that, as always, will be titillating only to those who share Russell's conventional preoccupation with the textbook fixations of sado-masochism.

Tommy (Roger Daltrey) in the clutches of the Acid Queen in Russell's version of The Who's rock opera; an *Exorcist* without tears.

A large helping of this same slop turns up in *Mahler*, a scandalously dreadful film that Russell made prior to *Tommy* and that is now sneaking into American release on the new picture's coattails; in that musical biography the title character imagines his funeral as a ceremony in which his wife does a can-can on his coffin as SS troopers ready him for the crematorium. But what is insulting in *Mahler* is less so in *Tommy* because, in the latter picture, Russell is not fictionalizing a real-life artist's personal history in order to superimpose bogus aesthetic motives onto that artist's largely abstract art. In *Mahler* every note we hear is explained away by an event in the composer's life or an alleged pang in his unconscious; while a similar literal-mindedness flattens out and demystifies some of Townshend's sentiments in *Tommy*, at least the songs have lyrics that are sometimes open-ended enough to invite such treatment. Not that that makes the process any less horrifying: Russell's willingness to literalize the libretto in some sections of *Tommy*, his desire to nail a cross to anything that catches his eye in others, and his ability to mount a pure and simple (and exciting) "psychedelic" production number in still others suggest an ambivalence of approach that has nothing to do with the creation of first-class art. It would be better if this filmmaker had given us a coherent misinterpretation of his material than these scatter-shot interpretations, which, of course, add up to no interpretation at all.

In that way *Tommy*, which is often the most entertaining of Russell's movies, also ends up being the definitive evidence of the exceedingly minor nature of his talent. Here the director has more inherent freedom of aesthetic choice than he has had with any other project he's worked with (including even *The Boy Friend*), and yet still it behooves him to find an organic unity for his work. Like most lengthy rock compositions, Townshend's is built around an associative rather than a linear structure, but what does Russell do? He grabs onto its thin narrative line for dear life-attaching more importance to it than the work's creator or its record and concert audiences ever did. In the film

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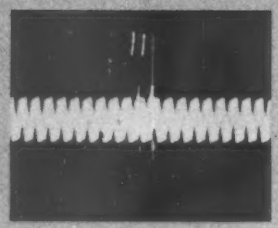
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version of *Tommy*, numbers have even been added to the original score in a vain effort to smooth out the rough transitions and prop up the story. Russell would have been more faithful to the spirit of the music if he had devised his own visual, emotional or even intellectual scheme for the work and then reversed or even eliminated some of the songs to fit his cinematic plan; that's what some other directors who share his grounding in '60s countercultural chic would have done (Richard Lester and Nicholas Roeg come to mind), but to do that requires aesthetic integrity, a point of view and a mastery of the medium. Russell *does* have the skill to pack a movie screen with splashy, rapturous spectacles (a skill that serves him well in *Tommy*), and there are plenty of working directors who don't have even that; but if film is, in that redundant cliche, a visual medium, the definition of "visual" cannot be limited to filling a frame with pretty pictures—that's window dressing. *Tommy* doesn't have a visual style beyond its periodic regurgitations of expressionism; each scene has its own style—indeed is dripping with it—and that's not the same thing. (The director does try to work silver pinballs into as many scenes as possible, but that motif has no content, unless it's to remind us that the film is concerned with pinballs.) Great moviemaking requires the moviemaker not only to create images but to relate the images to each other and then use that relationship to express something—if not an original vision of life then at least an identifiable sensibility. Russell can't link his pictures together with his eye—*Tommy* comes to a dead halt after most major musical numbers, much in the manner of a clunky Hollywood musical comedy—and if his strung-together tableaux express anything, it's only an undirected flamboyance and a tired tastelessness that are an aging hipster's idea of irreverence.

Movies that do expand our consciousness often do so by taking the physical world and making us see it through new eyes, as though we'd never seen it before. Not being able to accomplish that with his soul or his camera, Russell spends money on fancy sets and animation. Anything goes in *Tommy*: if the director wants a laugh, he'll send some women dressed in lingerie and goggles into the midst of a World War II holocaust; if he wants to be taken seriously, he'll give us Tommy's dad crucified on an airplane. Thanks to the power and vitality of Townshend's music and the idiosyncratic interpretations the melodies receive from such unlikely vocalists as Ann-Margret and the seedily funny Oliver Reed (as Tommy's father)—as well as to Russell's helter-skelter deployments of blitzkrieg images—*Tommy* is a better rock movie than most others of the past drug-sotted decade. But the best head movies—the kind Russell can never make—are those that shake our brains instead of just rattling our skulls.

Like *Zasbriskie Point*, Michelangelo Antonioni's other, career-disrupting, English language movie, **The Passenger**, his new one, is a real heartbreaker. There's fabulous poetry in this account of a jaded TV journalist who trades in his identity for that of a deceased gunrunner, and there's heart, too, but the project never truly comes together as a film. *The Passenger* is a waste of a strong, Hitchcockian premise, and within its ramshackle structure one can find the remains of a lot of half-developed dramatic issues that obviously matter a great deal to the director. In Locke (Jack Nicholson) Antonioni has found the kind of hero he's worked with best in recent years: a man who's tired of that conditioning which causes us to regard all experience as we've been programmed to understand it. Once Locke is thrust into the revolutionary camp of an African civil war, he, like *Blow-Up*'s photographer (and like Antonioni himself on his filmmaking visit to China), starts to see past the lies and superficial "realities" he had always accepted as an "objective" reporter; Locke starts to feel again—and dares

Schneider and Nicholson in Antonioni's *The Passenger:* fabulous poetry in a ramshackle structure.

to ask himself the hard existential questions that he had always swept aside.

As Antonioni has set up his story, Locke's personal revolution should parallel that of the obscure society in which the character unwittingly becomes a cog. But the movie moves in fits and starts, often misweighing the value of its various elements: far too much energy is expended on detailing Locke's wife's attempts to clear up the fishy circumstances of her husband's "death" and far too little is devoted to weaving the web of political-underworld events that will ultimately ensnare the protagonist. The film has a female lead (Maria Schneider), a young woman who drifts into Locke's life and rides with him for a while, but if she has a function other than to add an irrelevant aura of sex, it's hardly clear. Too often Antonioni uses her to point up what's going on ("What are you running away from?" she asks her new-found lover), and every time Schneider opens her mouth to speak, it's bad news; her English has that same flat, pseudo-naiveté that turned the amateur stars of *Zabriskie* into laughing stocks. Nicholson, who also has some unfortunate speechifying to dispose of (notably an elaborate tale about a blind man who regained his sight only to learn "how much dirt there was [in the world], how much ugliness"), is okay, given that he's completely miscast. The actor's characteristic gestures suggest a rebellious spirit that doesn't mesh with a reporter who was once such a play-by-the-rules patsy for the official lines of the fascist men of state he interviewed; nor does a throwaway line that tells us that Locke is an American-educated Englishman explain away his decidedly un-British twang. The best way to see *The Passenger* might be to dispense with the sound altogether and watch what the director does with the angularity of a London housing development, the parched expanse of an Algerian desert or the still, solitary cells of a God-forsaken inn. The movie ends with a virtuoso take lasting seven minutes—a magnificent run of film that turns the simple act of looking out a window into a visual exercise that encapsulates the filmmaker's sense of the life cycle of his highly charged world. One wants to cry, as one did after the apocalyptic finale of *Zabriskie*, over Antonioni's failure to precede his stunning climax with a movie that might effectively support it.

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Pepper has to exist is to show us how terrific its star looks in a veritable parade of period fashions—but, given that the star is Robert Redford, millions of customers may find that reason enough. This time out Redford is cast as a daredevil aviator of the post-WW I era, and while some heavy stuff happens in this film (deaths, aerial hijinks, heartbreaks), somehow none of it seems quite so vital as the spectacle of Redford strolling around in the high boots, goggles and flowing neck scarves that the role of Waldo Pepper allows him to wear. Redford is one of about three honest-to-God movie stars that we have right now—one of those chosen few screen personalities who has no need to dirty his hands with mundane chores like acting—and if director George Roy Hill and screenwriter William Goldman hadn't insisted on surrounding him with other actors, lots of talk and more vintage airplanes than you might ever care to see outside of the Smithsonian Institution, *The Great Waldo Pepper* might have broken through the clouds where so much of it takes place. As it stands, the film is a Universal holiday package indistinguishable from all its recent predecessors. Nothing in *Waldo* has been left to chance, whether it be the mindless recycling of bankrupt masculine fantasies, the contrived thrill-a-minute plots, the lowest-common-denominator gags or designer Henry Bumstead's unmistakably back-lot sets, which, like those for *The Sting* and *The Front Page,* would lead one to believe that every room in '20s America was decorated in shades of burnt sienna.

Waldo Pepper represents a reunion of sorts between Hill and Goldman, who both worked on *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid,* and their new collaboration has all the fire of a meeting between two lawyers who have come together to map out a tax shelter. Hill, once a talented director *(The World of Henry Orient)* with an identifiable personality, does little more here than duplicate the ambience of *The Sting,* his last Universal picture, right down to the vintage black-and-white studio logos that kick both movies off; only a churning sequence that eliminates the film's one interesting subsidiary character (an intense airplane designer, well acted by Edward Herrmann) generates any passion. Goldman's screenplay relies mainly on scoring sentimental points about the passing of the golden age of unregulated amateur aviation, the early days of Hollywood (where the stunt pilots retreated to work in war movies) and the eternally uplifting qualities of buddy-buddy male friendships (Redford's pal is played by Bo Svenson). As anyone who has had the misfortune to see Goldman's *Stepford Wives* knows, this writer's view of women comes from never-never land: the parts he provides here for such skillful actresses as Margot Kidder and Susan Sarandon (the latter of whom gets the film's only laugh) serve only to add an occasional, obligatory change of pace. (The non-role Goldman wrote for Katharine Ross in *Butch* is the prototype for the objectified heroine of most recent all-male American movies.) The plot is about Waldo's efforts to become the greatest flier of them all—an ambition he can realize only by having an aerial duel with immortal German flying ace Ernst Kessler (Bo Brundin, a stiff). By the time the two aviators are paired off in a Hollywood reenactment of the German's most famous WW I dogfight, the battle has been described to us so many times by Waldo, Ernst and their cronies that we could probably get in the planes and fly the damn mission ourselves.

BOOKS

Rusty lock and rusty key

By Geoffrey Wolff

A Time to Die *by Tom Wicker.* Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Co. (342 pp., illustrated, $10).

Somebody—it must have been the Gamesman and Lifeman, Stephen Potter—dedicated one of his books to God thus: *In the prayer that He may restore to my mother the wonderful gift of sight.* Disarming, what? Not the kind of sentiment to encourage a savage critical attack. Something of the same kind is at work in Tom Wicker's narrative account of the 1971 Attica insurrection and the subsequent Attica massacre, though Wicker cuts the ground from under his critics not by any comical and calculated plea for sympathy. Instead, he anticipates the worst that anybody could possibly say or think about his character, achievement, courage and talent, and says it first. His honesty in this odd process of name-calling is beyond question. The effect is, nevertheless, like Potter's, disarming.

Wicker at a news conference outside of Attica Prison.

This fellow that Wicker lays about with sponge-rubber clubs does not, on the evidence of his bona fides, seem deserving of such an inventory of wretchedness and abuse. He began at the New York *Times* in 1960, was White House correspondent within a year, and bureau chief in Washington within four years. He inherited Arthur Krock's prestigious column, "In the Nation," is admired as a wise and good man and a good ole boy as well. He holds to the newsman's most telling virtue, the honored deadline, and he hasn't betrayed his modest southern childhood. He has written six novels and published them, too.

Wicker was gourmandizing at an Establishment lunch in Washington when his secretary telephoned with the

news—September 8, 1971—that there had been a prison rebellion at Attica, in upstate New York, and that the inmates wanted Wicker among the observers of the uprising and as a go-between in negotiations with the authorities. He accepted their invitation, but with some reluctance. Writing of himself in the third person, in frank imitation of Norman Mailer's technique for his *Armies of the Night*, Wicker describes the man who took the call at lunch as "disappointed," a man "who believed he had fallen short. Having turned 45 three months before . . . he was overweight, affluent beyond his sense of decency, a writer who feared he had written nothing that would last, a political commentator who believed he preached mostly to the converted. He secretly doubted his own character and openly questioned many of the values of the society in which he lived." Well, what libel can be left? He and his wife, he adds, were divorcing each other. He had always longed to write fiction as grand as Faulkner's or Melville's, and suspected at last that he never would. And he worried about his courage.

Which was the first bit of his character to be tested at Attica. During the five days between the uprising and the awful police riot during which 43 men died, 10 of them hostages shot not by inmates but by their putative saviors—the state police and fellow guards—Wicker spent many hours unarmed and utterly at the mercy of some 1,500 convicts, most of them black, all of them furious, all of them in prison for mean and ugly criminal acts. He never learned to look forward to his passage across the frontier from the certitudes of the state into the improvisational society of D-yard, but he made it, and the passage enhanced his opinion of himself, as it should have.

Even as a child Wicker had "wavered between thinking himself better and worse than his companions; but he always thought himself *different.*" One of the lessons he learned at Attica, and by no means the least, was to attend to everyone's distinctions and special claims. No one acted during the uprising according to form. The prisoners were certified beasts, willing to die or to kill their hostages at the slightest provocation, according to form. The correctional officers, according to form, were instruments of order, lawmen. But the inmates killed no hostages (with the exception of a single guard, injured during the initial uprising, surrendered to the authorities, in whose care he died several days later), even when they were attacked by the state police.

The hard lesson that Wicker learned from Attica—and he didn't know he'd learned it till Roger Wilkins pointed it out to him—was this: "In D-yard, behind their futile trenches and barricades, in their vivid flights of defiance, even in the suspicion and distrust of their hard experience, many of these despised inmates finally had not believed that the state—society, The Man—would shoot them down. The hard truth was that the Attica brothers had had more faith in the state than the state had had in them. Both had been wrong." If Wicker seems to tilt as an observer away from the state and toward the inmates, it is for many a good reason. But at one time or another there were 37 observers in D-yard, listening to the rhetoric of revolution, and stirring it, and most of them far more openly associated themselves with the inmates' cause, and their contempt for those sullen and humiliated guardians of the public order did much to inflame the police when at last, after being leashed for five days, they were set in full fury upon a pen of niggers to whip ass.

Wicker's driving purpose from the day he first saw Attica was to keep people from killing one another. To this end he labored to prod the state of New York to grant the inmates amnesty from crimes related to the uprising, but the state categorically refused to consider amnesty and the inmates refused to surrender to the state without amnesty. So much provoked the collision of September 13th, but did not force it or cause it to become a bath of blood. Bad faith, cowardice, stupidity, cruelty and irresponsibility abounded during those days. The inmates talked such hyperbolic bullshit, play-acted such a wound-up melodrama of revolution and violence; they issued such threats and ultimatums, and professed themselves so eager to die in The Cause that it might with some reason be argued that they talked themselves into the grave. And the observers pandered to them, told the inmates what they wanted to hear rather than what they needed to know. Early in his observations Wicker noted a phenomenon he called "protecting your constituency" among the observers, a formal locution for the ignoble but human instinct to cover your own ass. Thus, whenever an observer was called upon to negotiate between the prisoners and the state, he was inclined to ask what effect his interven-

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tion would have upon his own self-respect, career, prospects.

Wicker, out of his insurmountable sympathy for humankind, refuses to accuse Nelson Rockefeller, who refused to come to Attica, who ordered the state police to put down the rebellion, of either cowardice or political calculation in his disastrous refusal to walk the last mile to save a life or two or 43. Wicker is too generous. But Rockefeller had his alter ego in craven me-firsting Bobby Seale, a man as mighty in his sphere as Rockefeller in his. The inmates pleaded for Bobby, and finally, reluctantly, he flew to New York from California, at the personal request of his lawyer, William Kunstler. Seale saw the situation as a no-win for him, so he decided to split for the Coast. The prisoners sent him a note just before he left: *"Brother Bobby: Our lives are in your hands. Come! Attica prisoners."* Seale crumpled the note and threw it on the prison floor, and Wicker was outraged.

Wicker himself, let it now be said, stands guilty on at least one of the hundreds of counts with which he has been charged by himself. He had an opportunity, at a crucial moment, to tell the inmates a truth they did not seem to comprehend, that the state was preparing to blow them right out of this world. He did not. He does not, even now, know why he held his tongue, nor does he offer guesses. Perhaps he was silenced by the extravagance of the rhetoric that had been thundering down so long and to such little effect. Perhaps he feared that a plain truth or two, set off in the volatile atmosphere of D-yard, would cost him his life. For whatever reason, he failed to do all that he might have done, and Lord he knows it!

The reason for the uprising was the usual: brutality by guards against prisoners, subhuman regulations and living conditions, broken promises of prison reform. There's no need to review the evil and futility of a system predicated on the redemption of criminals through caging them so that in their solitude and misery they will repent of their acts and reform themselves. But just for the record, once again, here is a prisoner putting his case. He committed a crime, was caught, convicted and sentenced to Attica: "So we're all even, right? I did it, I'm in here for doing it. Fair and square, no complaint. Paying my debt to The Man. But, brother, you got to understand that's just the way it *ought* to be, that's not the way it *is*. That Man is committing crimes against *me* every day I'm here. And nobody's saying shit about that."

Of course. And top nobody of all is the sanctimonious ex-governor of New York. No state policemen were indicted for their wholesale murders of inmates, who fired not one known shot in retaliation while they were being subdued. And when the prison had been returned to the state September 13th, and the inmates, stripped naked, were driven from place to place with sticks, beaten by correctional officers yelling, "Crawl, you motherfuckers, crawl, crawl," the chief correctional officer of the state considered the beatings to have been "in the manner of an old fraternity hazing." And Rockefeller finally conceded that the uprising would never have taken place had he begun reforming the state's prisons when he began his first term, a brave concession that was followed by no single significant reform after it was reluctantly, in the spirit of let's-close-the-book-on-this-unfortunate-incident, offered.

The inmates, during the uprising and in their insistence upon amnesty, seemed unfairly and often maddeningly convinced of the bad faith of the state. Their suspicions have all been vindicated. There have been awful reprisals against them, and lies about what happened have been sold wholesale by the state, for the purposes of the state. This morning's New York *Times* tells about a guard who lied about the death of William Quinn, the correctional officer who died of the wounds he suffered during the first moments of the uprising. This guard claimed to have witnessed a prisoner beat Quinn with a shovel. Later he admitted that he had seen no such thing. Asked why he had lied, he said he had hoped to ingratiate himself with his story to the prison authorities, to win a transfer from Attica to Elmira, which he desired. By lying, he exposed a prisoner to the death penalty. He was, however, not indicted for perjury. Nor was he fired. Nor was he disciplined or chastised in any way. He was . . . transferred from Attica to Elmira.

Wicker was recently asked if he would answer again a similar call, to a similar place, under similar circumstances: "I would do that, but I would have a whole different approach to it. I would announce to both sides: 'Look here, I'm not here trying to negotiate your goddamn problems. I'm going to stand here and if either of you shoot the other, you've got to shoot me first because I'm in between.'" After Attica, the only question is which side would shoot first.

End of an ERA?

FINAL TRIBUTE

By Lisa Wohl

The housewife corps descended on the Illinois State Legislature last month to wage holy war against the Equal Rights Amendment. "Save Our Children from Homosexuals!" screamed one sign. "Don't Make Me Leave My Home!" thundered another. Teenaged daughters in scrubbed faces and frilly blouses wept, "Please Don't Draft Me." Gallants on the floor of the Illinois Senate bowed before the ladies and rushed through a procedural resolution requiring three-fifths instead of a simple majority to pass ERA. Proponents, caught without the necessary votes, were forced to postpone their attempt to ratify.

Soon afterward, South Carolina became the ninth state this year to defeat the amendment since state legislative sessions began in January. Although 34 states have approved the measure guaranteeing equal legal rights regardless of sex, and only four more states are needed to make ERA the 27th Amendment to the Constitution, ERA backers are frankly worried. After four years of hard slogging, women whose affiliations range from the Women's Christian Temperance Union to the National Organization for Women are asking, "Can America of the 1970s refuse women equal rights?"

The answer may depend on an unsavory alliance of ultraconservatives who see the defense of Real American Womanhood as their best rallying cry since "Support Your Local Police." ERA backers have charged that the John Birch Society, the Christian Crusade and others of their ilk are the real source of the housewife brigades' seemingly unlimited pin money. (In Illinois more than 600,000 copies of one anti-ERA leaflet were passed out at supermarkets, and the material was reprinted in half-page ads in every major paper in the state.)

Right-wing opponents have found their most vociferous champion in 49-year-old Phyllis "I Am A Housewife" Schlafly, a flinty blonde veteran of conservative politics who leaves her six kids at home to travel the country and sound the alarum by testifying before state legislative hearings. While Schlafly's *Stop ERA* works the national front, local organizations have been galvanized by her example.

The arguments have usually been the same across the country: "If Jesus had wanted women to be equal, he would have had six women apostles." "ERA will force men and women to squat down together over open latrines!" "Pregnant women will be forced to fight in the jungles." The slogan "America: Love It or Leave It"—that erstwhile hit of the Vietnam war era—has resurfaced as "Send the Lib-

bers to Siberia. We'll Stay Home and Keep the Beds Warm!"

ERA's supporters have responded with memoranda, legal briefs and law review articles patiently explaining the complex issues surrounding women's legal status in contemporary America.

But the battle has been strictly uphill. "ERA is about sex but it sure isn't sexy," sighs one war-weary lobbyist. Nor does it butter a legislator's bread, says Patricia Keefer, director of field operations for Common Cause. Keefer thinks the hysterical housewives cannot claim all the credit. Some of those opposition legislators weren't as dumb as they voted.

"ERA is a tradeable issue," she explains. "Most male legislators aren't vitally committed to it, so they're willing to trade it for votes on other legislation." She notes that state legislators are generally elected on the basis of party ties rather than individual records. They therefore heed male-dominated and conservative political machines, not women voters.

Given the political realities, supporters have been creating their own pro-ERA mini-machines to get some womanpower into those smoke-filled rooms. "Women are going to hold male legislators accountable in 1976," Keefer promises. "And they're going to elect women legislators who can create a voting bloc and deal for ERA." If the amendment isn't ratified before then, Keefer sees 1977, after the elections, as the prime opportunity for ratification before the clock runs out in 1979.

To that end, supporters still hope to pick up one or two more states this year. Missouri, North Carolina and Florida, all targeted as promising, have yet to vote, and Illinois ERA advocates plan major rallies in Chicago and Springfield this month to drum up support for that three-fifths majority.

But regardless of the long-range outcome, in 1975 American women seem doomed to enter the bicentennial year aware that their status hasn't fundamentally changed since the Declaration of Independence. All *men* are created equal. As for women, better luck next century.

DEWAR'S PROFILES

(Pronounced Do-ers "White Label")

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LOUIS SLAUGHTER and EDWARD CARR

HOME: Kansas City, Missouri

OCCUPATION: Writer/Artist team

LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT: Created a highly successful comic strip which is drawn and distributed completely by Blacks.

QUOTE: "We use our comic strip to point out the problems faced by poor people in the ghetto ... and to make people laugh at themselves rather than at others."

PROFILE: Carr (25) is gregarious, people-oriented—likes to play drums and sing. Slaughter (32) is an introvert, preferring the solitude of fishing or reading.

Together, they're a highly imaginative, inventive team. They know "what's going down" in the ghetto, and they want to influence what they see.

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